Romances of Alexandre Dumas.

D'ARTAGNAN EDITION.

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The Romances of Alexandre Dumas

D'ARTAGNAN EDITION

BLACK ❧ THE STORY OF A DOG ❧ BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS ❧

BOSTON ❧ LITTLE · BROWN
AND · COMPANY ❧ ❧ M C M

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

In translating "Black" I have taken liberties with the text only to the extent of reconciling a few chronological and geographical inconsistencies which were blemishes in the fabric of a novel that may well rank among the author's best. Whipple once said that Milton could do justice to the devil, but not, like Shakespeare, to "poor devils." Dumas has here displayed the latter's human sympathy, and has given us a hero not unworthy of the creator of the immortal "Musketeers."

ALMA BLAKEMAN JONES.

Sierra Madre, California,
September, 1895.

LIST OF CHARACTERS.

Period, 1793–1842.

Louis XVIII., King of France.
Comte d'Artois.
Duc de Bourbon.
Monsieur Dambray, Chancellor of France.
Duc de Raguse, commanding the Gray Musketeers.
Monsieur de Cases.
Madame de Cayla.
Duchesse d'Angoulême.
Louis Philippe.
Napoleon.

Chevalier Dieudonné de la Graverie.
M. le Baron de la Graverie, his father.
Madame de la Graverie, the Chevalier's mother.
The Canoness of Beauterne, her sister.
Madame de Florsheim, friend of the Canoness.
Mathilde de Florsheim, her niece, married to Chevalier de la Graverie.
Thérèse, Mathilde's daughter.
Baron de la Graverie, the Chevalier's brother.
Captain Dumesnil.
Lieutenant Pontfarcy.
Mahouni, a young Tahitienne.

Comte d'Elbène.
Gratien d'Elbène, a cavalry officer } his sons.
Henri d'Elbène }
Lieutenant Louville, friend of Gratien.
Mademoiselle Adèle de Clermont, betrothed to Henri d'Elbène.
Monsieur Chalier.
Dr. Robert.
Madame Dubois, a linen-draper.
Mademoiselle Francotte, a shopkeeper.
Mother Denniée.
Pinaud, a courier.
Madame Wilhem, a concierge.
Pierre Marteau.
Marianne, the Chevalier's housekeeper.
Black, a spaniel.

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BLACK.

I.

IN WHICH THE READER MAKES ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE TWO PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS OF THE STORY.

The Chevalier de la Graverie was on the second round of his walk about town. Perhaps a more logical way of entering upon the subject would be to inform the reader who the Chevalier de la Graverie was, and in which one of the eighty-six departments of France was situated the town where he was taking his walk. But, in a fit of spleen, induced probably by the fog we have lately breathed in England, we have resolved to construct a novel that shall be quite original in style, quite the reverse of other novels. For this reason, instead of entering upon our story at the beginning, as heretofore, we shall begin at the end, — confident that the example will be imitated, and that henceforth novels will begin only at the end.

And yet another motive has led us to adopt this course of procedure: we fear lest the dryness of biographical details should repel the reader, and cause him to close the book at the end of the first leaf. Hence, as the fact cannot be concealed, we shall be content to say for the present that the scene opens in Chartres, in the year

1842, on the elm-shaded promenade winding around the old fortifications of the ancient capital of the Carnutes,— a promenade which has been at once the Champs-Élysées and the Little Provence of all the generations of Chartrains that have appeared in succession through two hundred years.

Now, having stated our reservation as to the retrospective personality of our hero,— or, rather, of one of our heroes,— that the reader may not accuse us of having dealt him a fatal blow without warning, we will continue.

The Chevalier de la Graverie, then, was on the second round of his walk about town. He had reached the part of the boulevard which overlooks the cavalry-quarters, and from which the eye can grasp, in all their details, the extensive grounds of the barracks.

The chevalier stopped. This was his halting-place.

Every day, the Chevalier de la Graverie, who set out from his house at noon precisely, after having taken his coffee clear and dropped three or four lumps of sugar into the back-pocket of his coat to nibble at while going along, retarded or hastened the second part of his walk so as to find himself at the exact spot we have just indicated, at the precise moment when the trumpet was summoning the cavalrymen to groom their horses.

Apart from the red ribbon that he wore on his coat, there was nothing in the world that could indicate in the Chevalier de la Graverie a fondness for military exercises; on the contrary, the Chevalier de la Graverie would have been taken for the simplest civilian. But he liked to view this picturesque and animated scene; it took him back to the time when he himself (we shall tell later under what circumstances) had been a guardsman,— a fact of which he was very proud, since he was one no longer. For without seeking, ostensibly at least, present

consolation in the memories of a past epoch, while philosophically wearing hair that had turned from pale yellow to pearl-gray, and seeming to be as satisfied with his exterior as a chrysalis is with its own, nor yet fluttering on the butterfly wings of the would-be young man, the Chevalier de la Graverie was not averse to posing as a connoisseur in the eyes of the peaceful townsmen who, like himself, came to seek their daily diversion opposite the barrack stables, and to giving his neighbors occasion to say, —

"Do you know, chevalier, you too must have been a handsome officer in your day?"

This assumption was all the more agreeable to the Chevalier de la Graverie for being wholly without foundation.

The equality of wrinkles, which is only a prelude to the grand equality of death, is a solace to those who have grounds for complaint against Nature. Now, the Chevalier de la Graverie had little for which to be thankful to capricious Nature, smiling nurse to some, frowning stepmother to others.

And now is the time, I think, to describe the Chevalier de la Graverie physically; he will develop morally later on. He was a small man, forty-eight or forty-nine years of age, fat in the way women are, or eunuchs. He had had, as we have said, yellow hair that was generally called blond in his passports; he still had great, china-blue eyes, whose expression was habitually restless, save when revery — for the chevalier dreamed sometimes — endowed them with a mournful fixedness; his large, smooth ears were soft and flabby; his lips were thick and sensual, the lower one hanging slightly, in the Austrian way; and, finally, his complexion, which was ruddy in spots, was almost pallid where it was not red.

This, the first part of his body, was mounted upon a short, thick neck springing from a torso that ran wholly to abdomen, — to the detriment of the arms, which were meagre and wanting in length. In conclusion, this torso went about on two little legs, as round as sausages and rather knock-kneed. At the time when he is presented to our readers, the head was covered with a broad-brimmed, low-crowned, black hat; the neck was swathed in a cravat of fine, embroidered battiste; the torso was arrayed in a waistcoat of blue piqué, surmounted by a blue coat with gold buttons; and lastly, the lower part of the body was encased in nankin trousers, a little short and tightly fitting at the knee and ankle, disclosing speckled stockings, which disappeared within low shoes tied with wide ribbons.

Such was the Chevalier de la Graverie, who, as we have said, had made the grooming of the cavalry horses the recreative event of the walk taken daily with the scrupulous care employed by methodical characters, after they have reached a certain age, in carrying out a medical prescription. He kept it for a tidbit; he was as fond of it as an epicure is of a dainty side-dish.

Having arrived opposite to a wooden bench on the summit of the slope descending to the stables, the chevalier paused, and looked around to see if the play was about to begin; he then seated himself methodically, as an old *habitué* might take his place in the orchestra at the Comédie-Française, with his chin resting on his gold-headed cane, waiting for the sound of the trumpet to perform the function of the manager's three beats.

And truly, on this day, the interesting spectacle might have arrested and charmed many others less curious and more *blasé* than our chevalier. Not that the daily performance was in itself unusual or peculiar; no, there

were the same horses — bay, chestnut, roan, black, gray, white, spotted, and pied — whinnying and quivering under the brush and curry-comb; there were the same troopers in undress uniform, the same bored-looking sub-lieutenants, the same adjutant-major, grave and exacting, watching for a breach of regulations as a cat watches a mouse, or a master his pupils. But the day on which we encounter the Chevalier de la Graverie a beautiful autumn sun shone down upon that leaping mass of bipeds and quadrupeds, and tripled the value of the scene as a whole and in detail. Never had the horses' flanks so shone, never had the helmets glittered with such fires, never had the sabres flashed such lightnings, never had every outline been so salient; never, in fine, had the setting been so splendid. The two majestic spires towering above the vast cathedral took fire from a warm ray that might have been borrowed from the sky of Italy; the least details of their fine sculpturings were thrown into relief by the keenness of the shadows, and the foliage of the trees on the banks of the River Eure was varied by a thousand tints of green, of purple, and of gold.

Although the Chevalier de la Graverie did not in any way belong to the romantic school, although he had never so much as thought of reading the "Poetic Meditations" of Lamartine, or Victor Hugo's "Autumn Leaves," the sun, the stir, the noise, the majesty of the landscape fascinated him; and like all idle souls, instead of dominating the scene and musing at his will, directing his revery in whatever way was most agreeable to him, he was soon absorbed by it, — falling into that weak intellectual state in which thought seems to quit the brain, and the soul the body, in which one looks without seeing and listens without hearing; while a throng of visions, follow-

ing one another like the colored bits of a kaleidoscope — and that without the dreamer's having the power to seize upon one of his visions and arresting it in its flight — ends by producing an intoxication distantly resembling that of the eaters of opium or hashish.

The Chevalier de la Graverie had for some time abandoned himself to this listlessness, when he was brought back to a perception of the realities of life by a sensation of the most positive nature. It seemed to him that a bold hand sought furtively to slip into the left pocket of his redingote.

The Chevalier de la Graverie turned brusquely about, and to his great surprise, instead of the gallows-face of a cutpurse or a pickpocket, he saw the honest, placid physiognomy of a dog, which, without being the least in the world embarrassed at having been caught in the act, continued to hanker after the chevalier's pocket, gently wagging his tail and wistfully licking his chops.

The animal that had so inopportunely snatched the chevalier from his revery, belonged to the great race of spaniels that came to us from Scotland along with the aid sent by James I. to his cousin Charles VII. He was black (we speak of the spaniel, pray understand), with a white streak that began at his throat and, widening, traversed his breast and descended between his forelegs, forming a sort of jabot, or frill; his tail was long and shaggy; his silky hair had a metallic lustre; his ears, delicate, long, and set low, enframed intelligent, almost human eyes, from between which sprang a muzzle slightly tipped with red.

Assuredly, he was a magnificent animal, well worth the trouble of admiring; but the Chevalier de la Graverie, who piqued himself on his indifference to all beasts, and to dogs in particular, gave little attention to the exterior

charms of this one. He was disappointed. During the second which had sufficed for a perception of what was taking place behind his back, the Chevalier de la Graverie had built up an entire drama.

There were robbers in Chartres! A band of pick-pockets had invaded the capital of the Beauce with the intention of exploiting the pockets of the citizens, who were well known to stuff them out with valuables of every description. These audacious miscreants had been unmasked, seized by the police, dragged before the courts, sent to jail, — all this, thanks to the perspicacity, the keenness, of an unpretending lounger. It was splendidly theatrical, and one can understand that it was disagreeable to be hurled from such lofty events into the calm monotony of the every-day happenings of a walk about town.

So, in his first impulse of bad humor against the author of this deception, the chevalier thought to repel the intruder by an Olympian frown, the might of which it seemed impossible that the animal should be able to withstand.

But the dog bore intrepidly the fire of that regard, and, in return, contemplated his adversary with an amiable air. His great yellow, humid eyes beamed with so much expression that those mirrors of the soul (as a dog's eyes may be called as well as those of man) said plainly to the Chevalier de la Graverie: "Charity, monsieur, if you please!" And that with an accent so humble, so piteous, that the chevalier was moved to the depths of his soul, and he smoothed his brow; then, fumbling in that same pocket into which the spaniel had tried to thrust his pointed muzzle, he drew forth one of the lumps of sugar that had excited the thief's cupidity.

The dog received it with all imaginable delicacy; see-

ing him open his mouth to receive the dainty alms, one could never have believed that a wicked intent, a purpose to rob, had ever been harbored in that honest brain. Perhaps the disinterested observer might have desired an expression of countenance somewhat more grateful as the sugar was crunched between the white teeth; but gormandizing, which is one of the seven cardinal sins, ranked among the amiable vices of the chevalier, who regarded it as one of the weaknesses that beguile social intercourse. Consequently, instead of entering complaint against the dog's more sensual than grateful expression, he followed with unfeigned and almost envious admiration this exhibition of gastronomic enjoyment.

Yet the spaniel was decidedly of the race of beggars! The benefit was no sooner absorbed than he seemed to remember it only to solicit another, which he did, amorously licking his lips, with the same play of beseeching looks, the same humble and caressing attitudes whose worth he had just experienced. Like most mendicants, he did not hesitate to pass from pleasing to importunate begging, but instead of censuring his importunity, the chevalier encouraged his vicious tendencies by producing the bits of sugar one by one, ceasing only when his pocket was quite empty.

The critical hour for gratitude was about to strike. The Chevalier de la Graverie saw it approach, not without a certain degree of apprehension. There are always traces of self-conceit and egotism in benevolence, even when exercised toward a dog. One likes to think that the hand at which a gift is received invests it with all its value; and the chevalier had so often seen debtors, favorites, and courtiers, turn their heels to a licked-out dish, that, in spite of the vanity at which we have just hinted, he dared not greatly hope that a single member of the

dog fraternity would not follow the traditions and examples afforded his kind by the sons of Adam from the beginning of the march of time.

Whatever philosophy long experience had taught him in this respect, it was painful to the Chevalier de la Graverie to test once more, at his own expense, the universal ingratitude. He asked nothing better than to spare this chance acquaintance the embarrassment of that terrible proof, and himself the humiliation that must result therefrom. Hence, having a last time sounded the depths of his redingote, and being well convinced that he lacked the means of prolonging this agreeable acquaintance so long even as the duration of a crumb of sugar, — after having, before the eyes of the spaniel, turned his pocket inside out as a proof of perfect good faith, he gave the dog a friendly pat, intended to serve at once as benediction and farewell; then, rising, without daring to look back, he resumed his promenade.

All this, you understand, does not proclaim the Chevalier de la Graverie to be a bad man, nor the spaniel a bad dog. It is certainly a point gained that, having to bring on the scene a man and a dog, the man is not wicked nor the dog rabid. Also, I think myself obliged, in view of the improbability of the former statement, to assert that I am telling you, not a fiction, but a true tale.

Chance had, this time, brought together a good man and a good dog.

Once is not always!

II.

IN WHICH MADEMOISELLE MARIANNE GIVES A CLEW TO HER CHARACTER.

We have seen that the chevalier resumed his walk without venturing to turn his head to learn whether or not he was followed by the dog. But he had not reached the Pont de la Courtille, — a place well known, not only to the citizens of Chartres, but to the inhabitants of the entire canton, — before his resolution had already undergone a rude assault, and it was not without exercising really moral strength that he was able to resist the suggestions of the demon curiosity.

By the time the Chevalier de la Graverie was approaching the Porte Morard, his curiosity was so urgent that the passing of the stage-coach which ran on the old Paris route, its five horses at a hard gallop, served as a pretext for stepping aside; and while doing so, he turned his head as if inadvertently, and, to his great surprise, he perceived the dog following at a lock-step, and gravely, like an animal possessed of a conscience in what he did, and acquitting himself according to his conscience.

"But I have nothing to give, my poor fellow," cried the chevalier, shaking his limp pockets.

One would have thought the creature understood the full import of these words; for, darting ahead, he executed two or three frolicsome gambols, as if to testify his gratitude; after which, seeing the chevalier stop, and not knowing how long the halt would last, he stretched

himself at full length, flat upon his stomach, rested his head on his extended paws, shot two or three joyous barks into the air, and waited for his new friend to resume his walk.

At the chevalier's first movement the dog sprang to his feet and bounded on ahead.

Just as the animal had seemed to understand the man's words, so the man appeared to comprehend the animal's capers. The chevalier stopped, and lifting both hands and letting them drop again, exclaimed: —

"Good! you wish that we should go in company. I understand you; but, unfortunately, I am not your master, not I; and to follow me, you must abandon some one else, some one that has raised you, lodged, fed, nursed, and petted you, — a blind man, perhaps, whose guide you are; a dowager whose comforter you doubtless are. A few miserable pieces of sugar have caused you to forget them, as, later, you would forget me if I were weak enough to adopt you. Go! off with you, Medor!" commanded the chevalier, this time emphatically addressing the brute. "You are only a dog; you have no right to be ungrateful. Ah, if you were a man," continued the chevalier, parenthetically, "it would be another thing."

But the dog, instead of obeying the command, or of yielding to the chevalier's philosophy, redoubled his barks, his gambols, his enticements to the promenade.

Unhappily, this second current of thought, mounting in the chevalier's brain like an evening tide, each wave of which advances more darkly than the last, had made him gloomy. At first it had been flattering to have inspired the sudden attachment testified by the animal; but, by a natural reaction, he had reflected that this attachment undoubtedly concealed an ingratitude more or less black. He had considered the stability of such a

friendship at sight; he had, in short, strengthened himself in a resolution taken many years before, — a resolution according to which (we shall explain later) neither man nor woman nor brute must in future have any place in his affections.

By means of this artfully managed hint, the reader must begin to perceive that the Chevalier de la Graverie belonged to that honorable religion whose god is Timon, whose messiah is Alceste, and whose designation is misanthropy.

And so, although determined to cut to the quick in freeing himself from this *liaison* at its beginning, the Chevalier de la Graverie endeavored at first to send the dog away by persuasive means. After having, as we have seen, addressed him as Medor, inviting him to withdraw, he renewed the invitation, calling him in turn by the mythological appellations of Pyramus, Morpheus, Jupiter, Castor, Pollux, Actæon, Vulcan; then by the ancient names, Cæsar, Nestor, Romulus, Tarquin, Ajax; then by the Scandinavian names, Ossian, Odin, Fingal, Thor. From these he passed to the English Trim, Tom, Dick, and Nick; from English names he turned to the picturesque Sultan, Phanor, Turk, Ali. Finally, he exhausted the entire martyrology of dogs from the age of fables down to our own time, in the endeavor to find a name that should aid to introduce into the head of that obstinate spaniel the fact that he could not possibly continue to travel in his suite; but there is a saying applicable to men, that no one is so deaf as he that will not hear, and it was evident that in this instance, at least, the proverb must apply to dogs.

In fact, the spaniel, so prompt to divine the meaning of his friend a little earlier, now appeared to be a thousand leagues from comprehending it. The more threat-

ening and severe the chevalier's face, the more he ransacked his throat for a harsh metallic tone, the more sprightly and playful were the attitudes which the animal assumed, as if in response to agreeable badinage.

At last, when the chevalier, much against his will, but constrained by the necessity of making his intent clear and unmistakable, decided to employ the *ultima ratio* of dogs, and raised his gold-headed cane, the poor brute lay dejectedly down upon his back, and with a resigned air, presented his flanks to the stick.

Misfortunes — misfortunes which we by no means intend to keep secret from our readers — had made the chevalier a misanthrope; but Nature had not created him hard-hearted. Hence he was completely disarmed by the spaniel's submissive attitude. He passed his cane from his right hand over to his left, wiped his brow, — for the rôle he had just played, in which he had joined gesticulation to speech, had thrown him into a perspiration, — and, owning himself vanquished, but preserving his self-respect by a hope of revenge, he cried, —

"*Sac-à-papier!* come, if you will, you dog of a dog! but of the devil, if you follow me farther than my gate."

But the dog was probably of the opinion that who gains time gains all; for he at once rose to his feet, and as if quite consoled and in no wise discomfited, he enlivened the remainder of the promenade by a thousand capers about the master he seemed to have chosen, treating him so like an old friend that all the Chartrains whom they met stood amazed, and went back to their homes enchanted to have this enigma to put to their friends in the form of an affirmative interrogation: —

"Ah! so Monsieur de la Graverie keeps a dog, now?"

Monsieur de la Graverie, about whose affairs the city babbled, and during two or three days, perhaps, would

continue to babble, was very dignified; he appeared to be quite oblivious of the curiosity he was exciting along his route; and with a superb indifference as to his companion, he paused, absolutely as if he had been alone, at every place where he had been accustomed to pause, — before the Porte Guillaume, whose old battlements were being restored; opposite the tennis-court, animated by the awkwardness of six players and the shouts of a dozen gamins contending for the office of scorers; near a rope-walker's walk, whose work he inspected each day with an interest for which he never tried to account.

If sometimes a winning expression, or a tantalizing caress from the dog won a smile from the chevalier in spite of himself, he carefully blotted it out, resuming his affectedly grave air, like a swordsman who, uncovered by a feint of his adversary, cautiously puts himself on guard.

Thus they at last reached Number 9 Rue des Lices, which had for several years been the home of the Chevalier de la Graverie.

Arrived at the street door, the latter understood that the rest had been only a sort of skirmish, and that the real struggle was about to take place. But the dog, for his part, understood nothing at all except that he had arrived at the terminus of his promenade.

While the chevalier was inserting his latch-key into the key-hole, the spaniel, exempt, in appearance at least, from all anxiety, waited, placidly seated on his haunches, until the gate should open, as if long usage had caused him to regard the house as his own; then, as soon as the chevalier had stirred a hinge, the animal, darting quickly between his legs, stretched his nose over the threshold. But the master of the house closed the half-opened door so suddenly that it struck against the dog's nose, and the

key was hurled by the shock into the middle of the street.

The spaniel darted after the key, and, in spite of the repugnance of dogs in general to touching iron with their teeth, no matter how well they may have been trained, he delicately took it between his jaws and returned it to M. de la Graverie, *à l'Anglaise*, as they say in hunters' phraseology, standing erect on his hind legs, with his back turned toward the chevalier so as not to soil him with his fore-paws.

This manœuvre, without touching M. de la Graverie, charming as it was, yet afforded his brain matter for a certain number of reflections. The first was that he had no business with the first dog that came, and that, without being a learned dog exactly, he had just given proof of being a very well-trained one.

Although unshaken in his first resolution, he nevertheless thought the spaniel entitled to some consideration; and, as two or three people had already stopped to watch him, and the curtains of windows were parting, he resolved not to compromise his dignity in a struggle, which, considering the animal's vigor and perseverance, might easily end to his disadvantage; and, this resolution taken, he determined to call a third person to his aid.

Consequently, he pocketed the key which the spaniel had just returned to him, and, pulling the stag's foot suspended from a small iron chain, he rang the bell within.

In spite of the jingling sound echoing distinctly in the chevalier's ear, the bell produced no other effect. The house remained as silent as if he had rung at the castle gate of the Sleeping Beauty of the wood; and it was only when he had redoubled his appeals, with a correspondence between cause and effect indicating that he

would not be the first to tire, that an upper sash-window was pushed up, and the crabbed visage of a woman of fifty years, or thereabouts, was there enframed. The head advanced as cautiously as if a new invasion of Normans or Cossacks had threatened the city, and sought to discover the author of this uproar.

But M. de la Graverie, who had naturally expected to see the door of the ground-floor open instead of a first-story window, had pressed closely against the door, that he might have the less distance to cover in escaping into the interior, and had disappeared in the shadow of the cornice laden with wall-flowers growing there, green and thick-set, as in a flower-garden.

It was, then, impossible for the housekeeper to see him; she saw only the dog sitting on his haunches, three steps away, waiting, like the chevalier, for the door to open, his intelligent eyes lifted to the new personage now entering on the scene.

The sight of the dog was not calculated to reassure Marianne, — this was the old housekeeper's name, — his color still less. It will be remembered that the spaniel, save for two touches of red on the muzzle and a white jabot at the throat, was as black as a crow; and Marianne could recall no acquaintance of M. de la Graverie's who had a black dog, and thought only of the devil's having a dog of that color.

Now, being aware that the chevalier had vowed never to own a dog, she was very far from suspecting this dog of accompanying the chevalier. Besides, the chevalier never rang. The chevalier, who did not like to be kept waiting, had a pass-key, which never left him.

At length, after some hesitation, she ventured timidly to demand, —

"Who is there?"

The chevalier, guided by her voice as well as by the spaniel's glance, abandoned his post, took three steps into the street, and, making a shade of his hand, raised his head in turn.

"Ah! you are there, Marianne," said he. "Come down."

But when Marianne had recognized her master, she had lost her fear; and, instead of obeying his command, she parleyed: —

"Come down? What for?"

"Why, to open the door for me, apparently," responded M. de la Graverie.

Marianne's visage, from gentle and timid, as it had been at first, became crabbed and spiteful. She snatched out a long needle that had been sticking in her cap and hair, and, resuming her interrupted knitting returned, —

"To open the door for you? To open the door?"

"Certainly."

"Have n't you your pass-key?"

"Whether I have it or not, I tell you to descend."

"Good! then you 've lost it; for I am sure that you had it this morning. While I was brushing your clothes it fell out of your trousers-pocket, and I put it back there. Well, well! that is a carelessness I should not have thought you capable of at your age; but, thank God! one learns something every day."

"Marianne," returned the chevalier, giving slight indications of impatience, proving that he was not so much under the dominion of his housekeeper as one might have thought, "I tell you to come down!"

"He has lost it!" cried she, without having remarked the imperceptible change in the chevalier's tone; "he has lost it! Ah, *mon Dieu!* what will become of us? I shall have to run all over the town to have the lock

changed, — the door, perhaps; for I shall certainly not sleep in the house with the key travelling the highway."

"I have my key, Marianne," said the chevalier, becoming more and more impatient, "but I have reasons for not using it."

"*Jésus Dieu!* and what reasons can a man have, when he actually has his key, for not letting himself in with it, instead of making a poor woman, overwhelmed with work, chase down stairs and through the halls? And that reminds me that my dinner is on the fire. Oh, it is burning, it is burning, I smell it! and all for what, *mon Dieu!*"

And Mademoiselle Marianne began to withdraw.

But the chevalier was at the end of his patience; with an imperative gesture he kept the old woman at her post, saying severely, —

"Come, a truce to words, and open the door for me, you old lunatic!"

"'Old lunatic'! open the door for you!" shrieked Marianne, convulsively elevating her knitting above her head in the attitude of the antique imprecation. "What! you have your key, you say; you show it to me, and yet you would make me run through the house and across the court? I shall not do it, monsieur; that I shall not! I have put up with your whims for a good while, but I shall not submit to this one."

"Oh, the abominable shrew!" muttered the Chevalier de la Graverie, quite amazed at her obstinacy, and already broken down by his struggle with the dog. "I believe I shall have to part with her in spite of her skill in crab-soup and rabbit gravy; only, as I do not wish, at any price, to let this cursed spaniel enter my house, I will yield now, free to take my revenge later."

Then, more gently, —

"Marianne," said he, "I understand your astonishment at my apparent inconsistency; but this is the case: you see this dog — "

"Certainly I see him," said the waspish woman, conscious that she had gained all that the chevalier had consented to lose.

"Very well; he has followed me, in spite of myself, from the barracks of the dragoons; I am unable to get rid of him, and I wish you to come down and drive him away while I enter."

"A dog!" cried Marianne; "and it is for a dog that you are abusing an honest woman that has been in your service ten years! A dog! Well, for my part, I can show you how to drive away dogs."

And this time Marianne disappeared from the window.

The Chevalier de la Graverie, supposing that Marianne had left the window for the purpose of descending and coming to his aid in the quiet and respectable little programme of expulsion mapped out by him with reference to the animal, drew near to the door; the dog, resolutely determined to cultivate the acquaintance of a man whose pockets yielded such delicious morsels of sugar, drew near to M. de la Graverie.

Suddenly a species of cataclysm separated man and dog. A veritable cascade of water, a fall of the Rhine, a Niagara, issuing from the first story, inundated both of them.

The dog uttered a howl and fled. As for the chevalier, he drew his pass-key, inserted it into the keyhole, opened the door, and, in a state of exasperation easy to understand, crossed the threshold just as Marianne was issuing the tardy injunction,—

"Look out, Monsieur le Chevalier!"

III.

THE EXTERIOR AND THE INTERIOR OF THE HOME OF THE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE.

Number 9 Rue de Lices consisted of a house, a garden, and a court.

The building was situated between the garden and the court, but not, as usual, with the court in front and the garden in the rear. No; the court was at the left, and the garden at the right. Flanked by court and garden, the house faced the street.

In the court, by which one ordinarily entered, the sole ornament found was an old vine, which, not having been cut back for ten years, covered the gable of its neighbor, the house against which it leaned, with shoots whose vigor recalled to mind the virgin forests of the new world. Although the court was paved with stone, the grass, favored by the moisture of the soil and the shade of the roofs, had sprung up so thickly, so abundantly, in the interstices as to form a sort of chess-board in relief, whose squares were represented by the stones.

Unfortunately, the Chevalier de la Graverie, being a player of neither chess nor draughts, had never thought to take advantage of this circumstance, which might have formed the happiness of Méry or M. Labourdonnais.

Outside, the house had the cold, sad aspect characteristic of most of the dwellings of our old towns. The plaster with which it had once been coated had scaled off in large patches, revealing the ashlar-like nature of the

structure, covered here and there with laths nailed side by side; this imparted to the front the appearance of a face spotted over with a skin disease. The windows, bereft of their grayish paint and black with age, were fitted with small panes economically chosen from bottle-glass, — panes that served to admit only a greenish light into the apartments.

Had one but crossed the court and paused at the ground-floor, he would have needed only to find the kitchen-door ajar in order to gain a fair idea, and form a sufficient opinion of the master of the house; for then, through the opening, he would have seen the stoves of white faience, as clean and shining as the floor of a Dutch parlor, and usually brightened by the ruddy light of glowing coal. By the side of a stove, an immense fireplace, where huge logs blazed grandly and without stint as in the days of our ancestors, served for roasting on the spit, which was turned by means of the classic device imitating so agreeably the tic-tac of a mill; the hearth, paved with bricks, made a bed for the embers, without which there were no broiled meats, — embers for which there is no substitute, and which the modern economists, execrable gastronomers for the most part, have thought to supplant by an iron oven. Opposite to the fireplace and the glistening stoves, a dozen saucepans, glowing like so many ruddy suns, were displayed, arranged according to size from large to small, and polished every day like the guns of a man-of-war, — from the great untinned kettle, in which simmered the preserves and sirups, down to the tiny vessels in which were elaborated the sauce problems of algebraic cookery.

To one already aware that M. de la Graverie lived alone, without wife or children, without dogs and cats, without guests of any sort, in short, with Marianne for

sole domestic, that culinary arsenal was a revelation; and he would have recognized the dainty gourmand, the refined gastronomer devoted to the pleasures of the table, as easily as, in the middle ages, he might have recognized an alchemist by his furnaces, crucibles, retorts, alembics, and stuffed lizards.

Now, the kitchen-door being closed, here is what one saw on the ground-floor.

A very shabby vestibule, without ornament other than two wooden pegs, — on one of which, upon entering, the chevalier hung his hat, and on the other his umbrella, when he had been out with an umbrella instead of a cane, — contained an oak bench on which the servants sat, when, by chance, the chevalier received, and was paved with tiles, black and white, indifferently counterfeiting marble, whose coldness and dampness they possessed, — a dampness and coldness that clung to them in summer and winter alike. A vast dining-hall and an immense drawing-room, in which fires were never made save when the Chevalier de la Graverie gave a dinner, — that is to say, twice a year, — formed with the kitchen and vestibule the entire ground-floor.

These two rooms, moreover, fulfilled all that the exterior had promised in the way of dilapidation. The floor was warped and disjointed; the ceiling gray and dingy; the hangings, rent, soiled, and sagging, flapped in the disturbed air when a door was opened.

In the dining-room six wooden chairs painted white, of the style of the empire, a walnut table, and a buffet composed the furniture.

In the drawing-room, three fauteuils and seven chairs pursued but never overtook one another; while a lounge, having back and seat stuffed with hay, boldly usurped the estate and title of sofa. The decoration and furnish-

ing of this reception-room — a room never entered by the proprietor save on notable occasions — was completed by a round card-table, with its candlestick; a clock with stationary hands and motionless pendulum; a mirror in two pieces, reflecting muslin curtains with red and yellow bands hanging limp and lank before the windows.

But the first story was very different: the first story, it is true, was inhabited by the Chevalier de la Graverie in person. Thither a clew starting from the kitchen would have led in a direct line, if this labyrinth in the Rue de Lices had had an Ariadne.

Let one picture to himself three rooms, arranged, furnished, and hung with the minute care and the dainty elegance that seem the peculiar right of dowagers and ladies of leisure. Every desire had been anticipated, all had been arranged to render life smooth, easy, and delightful, in these three dainty little boxes, each of which was devoted to a special purpose.

The salon, which surpassed the other rooms in magnificence, was supplied with modern furniture, the pieces designed to support the plump little person of the Chevalier de la Graverie being wadded and upholstered with the utmost consideration and forethought. An ebony book-case, inlaid with buhl-work in copper, was filled with books bound in red morocco, which, it must be admitted, the chevalier's hands seldom fingered, and never at long sittings, flanked by two five-branched candelabra; a clock representing Aurora in her chariot, the wheels of which formed the dial, indicated the hour with precision; curtains of thick stuff, matching the furniture of the salon, draped the windows with an elegance that would not have been disdained in a boudoir of the Chaussée-d'Antin; while the white panels, still preserving traces of gilding, bespoke an elegance superior to

his own in the tenants or proprietors who had preceded M. de la Graverie.

From the salon a door opened into the bedroom.

In this room, the attention was first attracted by a bed like a monument, as large and as high. This bed was so lofty that the first idea presenting itself to the beholder's mind was that whoever achieved the ambitious purpose of sleeping in it must scale it by means of a ladder. Having won the heights of wool and down enclosed by curtains on three sides, the conqueror, from an alcove wadded and lined like a goldfinch's nest, was master of the situation; from there, looking about the chamber, he could muster armchairs, easy-chairs, sofas, and ottomans, foot-stools, cushions, and fox-skins, upright, sprawling, or spread over a moquette as thick and noiseless as a Smyrna carpet. Some were covered for winter with stuffs soft and yielding, others for summer with leather or sheep-skin; all were artfully shaped, comfortably contrived, ingeniously curved, inviting to rest and the siesta, and apparently rallying in defence of the fireplace, whose mantel was laden with tapers and candlesticks, and which was provided with a screen so arranged that not a degree of warmth should be lost. This room, the farthest from the street, overlooked the garden; so that no noise of cart or carriage, no vendor's cry, nor bark of dog, should disturb the repose of the sleeper.

Returning from the chamber to the salon and traversing its length, a great screen of antique lacquer-work, not merely from China, but from Coromandel, was found to mask a door leading into the third room.

This last, draped and carpeted, was furnished only with a little round mahogany table, a single armchair of mahogany, and a side-table, also of mahogany, whose marble top supported two silver coolers for champagne;

but on all sides this room was fitted with an array of glazed cabinets, whose contents made it a worthy and valuable appendix to the kitchen. Each of these cabinets was devoted to a specialty.

In one glittered massive silver plate. There was a service of white porcelain, banded with green and gold and bearing the chevalier's crest; there were goblets of Bohemian glass, red and white, whose delicacy and grace must surely add to the flavor of the wines which they served to conduct to the mouth, and present, across two sensual lips, to the sensitive nerves of the palate.

The second contained pyramids of table-linen, whose fineness could be divined from their silky lustre.

In the third stretched away, like an array of well-disciplined soldiers, motionless and drawn up in two or three ranks as to height, the wines for the entremets and deserts, collected from France, Austria, Germany, Italy, Sicily, Spain, and Greece, imprisoned in their national bottles, — some, short-necked and humped at the shoulders; others, slender and graceful. Some wore labels on their portly stomachs; others were wrapped with wisps of straw or rushes. All were alluring and full of promise, appealing at once to the imagination and the curiosity, and were flanked, as an army corps by light infantry, by cosmopolitan liqueurs in their breastplates of glass of all colors and of all shapes.

Finally, in the last cabinet, and this was the largest, hanging on the walls, suspended from the edges, strutting on the shelves, were eatables of all sorts, — terrines from Nérac, sausages from Arles and Lyons, apricot jam from Auvergne, apple-jelly from Rouen, comfits from Barre, preserves from Mans, pots of ginger from China, English pickles and sauces of every description, spice, anchovies, sardines, cayenne-pepper, dried fruits, pre-

served fruits, — everything, in short, that the good and wise Dufouilloux enumerated and designated by the expressive and memorable phrase, — "the harness of the jaws."

After this domiciliary inspection, — a little too circumstantial, perhaps, but which has yet seemed to us necessary, — the reader will have concluded that the Chevalier de la Graverie was a man very charitably occupied with his own person, and much concerned about the gratification of his stomach. And, not to leave in the shadow a single feature in this sketch we are making of him, we will add that this strongly marked tendency towards gluttony was counterbalanced by the worthy gentleman's mania for constantly believing himself ill, and feeling his pulse every quarter of an hour; let us add, too, that he was a rose-fancier, rabid.

Having reached this point, we realize the impossibility of going farther, not merely without making a halt, but also without turning back to a period of forty-eight or fifty years before; and we ask the reader's permission to relate how these three infirmities had overtaken the poor chevalier.

IV.

HOW AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE WAS BORN.

Let not the reader be too greatly astonished at this retrospective glance, which he must have foreseen, especially as we have introduced our hero at an age when the most interesting adventures of life — love adventures — are over; we pledge ourselves not to go back earlier than the year 1793.

In 1793, accordingly, the Baron de la Graverie, the father of the chevalier, was in the prison of Besançon on the double charge of hostility to the State and aiding refugees. The Baron de la Graverie could indeed have alleged, in defence, that from his own point of view he had only obeyed the most sacred laws of nature in sending money to his eldest son and to his own brother, both in a foreign land; but there are times when social law takes precedence of natural law, and he did not even dream of making that defence.

Now, the Baron de la Graverie's crime was one of those leading at that time most surely to the scaffold; and so, Madame de la Graverie, being free, engaged in the most active measures toward securing her husband's escape. Thanks to the gold which the poor woman lavished, her little plans sped very well. The jailer had promised to be blind; the turnkey had brought the prisoner some rope and a file, by whose aid he could saw off

a bar and gain the street, where Madame de la Graverie would be found awaiting him to leave France.

The next day, the fourteenth of May, was fixed upon for their flight. Never had hours seemed longer than the hours of that fatal day appeared to Madame de la Graverie. Every moment the poor woman gazed at the clock and reviled its slowness. At times the blood rushed back upon her heart, suddenly stifling her, and she told herself that it was impossible that she should ever see the dawn of the longed-for morrow. Towards four o'clock in the afternoon, unable longer to endure her suspense, she resolved, in order to allay the terrible anguish by which she was tortured, to go out and seek a refractory priest whom one of her friends was concealing in his cellar, and beg him to add his prayers to her own, invoking divine pity for the unhappy prisoner.

Madame de la Graverie, therefore, set out. While attempting to cross, in spite of its obstructions, one of the little streets leading to the market, she heard the deafening and continued uproar of a vast throng in the square. She endeavored to retrace her steps, but found it impossible to do so: the crowd barred all egress; advancing, it bore her upon one of its waves, and, as a river casts itself into the sea, the current which swept her on emptied into the square. The square was thronged with a crowd of people above whose heads the red silhouette of the guillotine was uplifted, where, empurpled by a last ray of the setting sun, flashed the fatal knife, — a terrible emblem of equality, if not before the law, at least in the presence of death.

Madame de la Graverie shuddered, and longed to flee. It was even less possible than before; another flood of people had poured into the square, forcing her to the centre, and it was useless to think of breaking through

the crowded ranks of the multitude. To attempt it was to risk exposing herself as an aristocrat, and to compromise in her own person, not merely the safety of herself, but that of her husband.

Madame de la Graverie's mind, bent for so many days upon one single purpose, that of securing the baron's escape, had acquired an admirable degree of clearness. She thought of everything. She became resigned to the inevitable, and resolved to endure courageously, and without too openly testifying her horror, the revolting spectacle about to take place before her eyes. She did not veil her face with her hands, — a demonstration that must have drawn the attention of her neighbors, — but she closed her eyes. A great clamor, which advanced by degrees like a train of ignited gunpowder, announced the arrival of the victims. It soon subsided, indicating that the cart was passing and taking its position.

Although crowded, jostled, lifted from her feet even, by the throng, Madame de la Graverie had until then refrained from looking up; but at that moment it seemed to her that an invisible and irresistible power raised her eyelids. She opened her eyes, saw the cart of the condemned a few paces distant, and in that cart her husband! At that sight she sprang forward, uttering a cry so terrible that the curious ones surrounding her separated to let this distracted, gasping woman, with the haggard eyes, pass through. She thrust aside those who still separated her from the tumbrel, with the overpowering strength possessed even by the frailest woman in a paroxysm of grief and despair, and forcing a path through the dense throng, as if by a cannon-ball, she reached the cart. Her first idea and effort were to climb into it to reach her husband; but the soldiers, recovering from their first surprise, prevented her. She then clung to

the sides of the cart, uttering the shrieks of a maniac, then suddenly ceasing, without transition, she began to entreat her husband's executioners as never victim entreated his own.

It was a spectacle so dreadful that, in spite of the sanguinary appetites necessarily developed in the rabble by the daily recurrence of these terrible dramas, more than one fierce *sans-culotte*, more than one of those abominable hags of the market-place who have been called by the frightfully appropriate name of "lickers of the guillotine," felt great tears course down their cheeks. So, when nature had succumbed to the strain of grief, when Madame de la Graverie, feeling her strength abandon her, was forced to loose her hold upon the cart, and then had swooned away, the poor creature found herself surrounded by sympathizing hearts eager to aid her. She was borne to her home and her physician was immediately called. But the shock had been too violent; the poor woman died in a few hours, in the height of delirium, having given birth, two months before its time, to a child as weak and slight as a reed, who was the same Chevalier de la Graverie whose interesting history we are writing to-day.

Madame de la Graverie's eldest sister, the Canoness of Beauterne, assumed charge of the poor little orphan, who, having come at seven months, was so delicate that the physician regarded it as impossible for him to live. But the grief occasioned her by the tragic deaths of her sister and brother-in-law developed in the old maid the maternal instincts placed by God in every woman's heart, but which celibacy so often dries and shrivels up in those of old maids. Madame de Beauterne's most ardent desire was to meet again those whom she mourned, after having worthily and piously accomplished the task their death

had imposed upon her. She determined, with the obstinacy characteristic of single men and women, that the child should live; and by dispensing treasures of patience and self-denial, she falsified the horoscope of the man of science, who is much more positive when predicting death than when promising life.

As soon as the roads were free, possessed of her treasure, — thus Madame de Beauterne styled Stanislas Dieudonné de la Graverie, — she proceeded to shut herself up in the community of German canonesses of which she was a member.

A community of canonesses, we hasten to explain to our readers, is not a convent; it is, indeed, very nearly the opposite, we ought to say, being a society of women of the world brought together as much by their tastes and necessities as by the strictness of their piety. They go out when they please, and receive whom they like; their very toilets, too, declare the elasticity of their vows, and so long as elegance, and coquettishness even, seem to compromise the safety of their neighbor only, they are tolerated in the order.

Amid such surroundings, half worldly, half religious, the little De la Graverie was reared. Among these good and amiable women he grew up. The mournful circumstances attending his birth intensely interested all the little sisterhood in his destiny; therefore never was child, were he heir of prince, king, or emperor, so nursed, coddled, and petted as was that one. A rivalry of devotion was established among the good ladies, in which, in spite of her tenderness for the young Dieudonné, Madame de Beauterne was usually distanced. A single tear shed by the child caused a general headache to the entire community; each of his teeth occasioned ten nights of sleeplessness; and had it not been

for the rigorous sanitary cordon established by the aunt against dainties, and her pitiless system of inspection of pockets, the little De la Graverie would have perished in his babyhood, gorged with sweets, stuffed with bonbons like Vert-Vert, and our story would now be ended, or, rather, it would never have had a beginning.

The general solicitude on his account was so great that his education was somewhat affected because of it. In fact, a great outcry was raised among the canonesses by a proposition hazarded one fine day by Madame de Beauterne, setting forth nothing less than the sending of Dieudonné to the Jesuits' College at Fribourg, to complete his education. She was charged with cruelty to the poor child, and her project met with such universal disapprobation that the good aunt, whose heart asked nothing better than to beat a retreat, did not even attempt to brave it. Consequently, the little man remained at liberty to learn only what pleased him, or much the same thing; and as Nature had not endowed him with pronouncedly scientific inclinations, he remained very ignorant.

It would have been unreasonable to hope that the good and worthy women would cultivate the character of their pupil with greater insight than they had displayed in training his intelligence. They not only, then, taught him nothing of the men among whom he was destined to live, nor of the usages with which he must come in contact, but, by the precautions put forth to shield their little puppet from the stern realities of the world, the experiences which would chill his tenderness, the shocks which would react upon his heart, they inordinately developed the nervous sensitiveness already disposed to be excessive through the emotions from which, like James I., the child had suffered in the maternal bosom.

As to the athletic training essential to the education of a gentleman, it was the same. The young Dieudonné was never permitted to take riding-lessons, with the result that the child's only mount was the gardener's donkey; moreover, when he rode the donkey, the animal had to be led by one of the good ladies; who cheerfully played for the young De la Graverie the rôle so reluctantly performed by Haman for Mordecai.

There was an excellent fencing-master in the town in which the religious community was situated, and it was briefly discussed whether the young Dieudonné should be taught fencing; but in addition to its being fatiguing exercise, what likelihood was there, with his charming character, so full of sweetness and grace, that the Chevalier de la Graverie would ever engage in a quarrel? He must needs be a monster of blackness and vice that would wish him harm, and, thank God! monsters are rare.

A hundred paces from the convent ran a magnificent river, whose waters flowed across meadows pied with kingcups and daisies, with an imperceptible current and as smooth as a mirror; the young students from the neighboring university frequented it daily, accomplishing deeds of prowess by the side of which those of Schiller's diver paled. Three times a week Dieudonné could have been sent to this river, and, under the instruction of an excellent swimming-master, he could have become as expert as a pearl-fisher; but its waters sprang from a source so cold that possibly they might have had a deleterious influence on the child's health. Dieudonné amused himself by paddling twice a week in his aunt's bath-tub.

Dieudonné, then, did not know how to swim, fence, or ride. There was a great resemblance, it will be observed, between his education and that of Achilles; but if, in

the midst of the good ladies surrounding the Chevalier de la Graverie, some Ulysses had appeared, unsheathing his sword, it is probable that instead of leaping upon the glaive, as did the son of Thetis and Peleus, Dieudonné, dazzled by the flashing blade, would have taken refuge in the darkest cellar of the community.

All this developed in Dieudonné a most deplorable temperament, physically and morally. At sixteen years of age he was unable to see a tear trembling on the eyelid of another without at once beginning to weep in unison; the death of his sparrow or canary brought on a nervous attack; he composed a most touching elegy on the death of a brown beetle, inadvertently crushed. All this afforded great delight to the canonesses, and won their unanimous applause. They exalted the exquisite delicacy of his heart, without a suspicion that this exaggeration of sensibility must necessarily lead their idol to an early grave, or induce a selfish reaction of these too philanthropic emotions.

From these premises, one ought not to expect to see Dieudonné receiving from his preceptresses rules in the art of pleasing and lessons in the science of loving. Yet thus it was.

Madame de Florsheim, one of Madame de Beauterne's companions, had with her a niece, as the latter had her nephew. This niece, two years younger than Dieudonné, was called Mathilde. She was blond, like all German maidens; like all German maidens, she had great blue eyes that welled with sentiment from the time she was out of swaddling-clothes.

Now, as soon as the two little creatures were able to walk without leading-strings, it seemed to amuse the good canonesses to pit them against each other. If, then, they neither taught Dieudonné nor caused him to

be taught how to ride, fence, or swim, they did teach him something else.

When, after running out into the garden, arrayed like a Watteau shepherd, in coat and trousers of sky-blue satin, white vest, silk stockings, and red-heeled shoes, Dieudonné returned with a bouquet of forget-me-nots or a spray of woodbine, he was taught to present his spray of woodbine or bouquet of forget-me-nots to his little friend, and that too, on bended knee, after the manner of the ancient chivalry. When the weather was bad and they could not go out, Madame de Beauterne sat down to her spinnet and played the air of the minuet from "Exaudet," whereupon Dieudonné and Mathilde, — the latter as much a shepherdess as her partner was a shepherd, — like two little puppets on wires, would advance, hand in hand, and then began an exhibition of dancing that brightened the eyes and cheered the hearts of the good canonesses. When, at last, the minuet ended, Dieudonné gallantly kissed the little white perfumed hand of his partner, there was general rapture; the good ladies, overcome with delight, hugged the children to their breasts and stifled them with kisses.

It was no longer Dieudonné, it was no longer Mathilde: it was little husband, little wife; and when they were seen wandering about the park under the great trees, like two miniature lovers, instead of the warning, "Do not go there, children, the solitude is dangerous, and the dense shade injurious," the dear canonesses, if they could possibly have done so, would have deepened the shade into twilight, and from the solitude would have chased even the robin red-breasts and the crickets. As a result, the two babes disdained the frolics of childhood for the affectations of sentiment, thus prematurely enervating their minds and brushing the bloom from their souls.

Moreover, however pure, however angelic these amours must have seemed to the fairies who protected them, the devil, watching them from the corner of his eye, assured himself that he should lose nothing thereby. In truth, such a course was very unwise on the part of these holy women. But how could it have been different?

To these worldly recluses the two poor children were as the backward glance of regret cast by the traveller upon the beautiful and smiling vale that he has just left, to enter upon a region of arid and desolate sands. It is true that if this spectacle momentarily lulled the poor old sorrowing hearts; if it subdued the bitterness of remembrance; if for an instant it regilded the illusions of lost youth; if for a brief space it caused them to forget their yellow teeth and ashen air, — it is certain that from the reaction which the poor souls endured, it cost them in the end more tears than smiles; since, after the ephemeral joys of this mirage, resignation became more difficult, hope more confused, faith more lukewarm, and many sighs drawn not from contrite breasts mingled with the prayers that came from aching hearts.

Last of all and much more serious, without the least in the world appearing to suspect it, the grave ladies profaned what is the holiest and most sacred of all earthly things, — childhood.

V.

THE FIRST AND LAST LOVE OF THE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE.

When Mathilde had attained her fifteenth year, and Dieudonné his seventeenth, the fine transports seemed strangely to cool. Dieudonné no longer brought forget-me-nots and woodbine from his walks; when the minuet was ended, Dieudonné no longer kissed the white hand of his partner, — he was content to make a simple bow. Indeed, the children were now never seen withdrawing innocently and alone to the deep shades of the woody park.

Yet an observant person might have seen Mathilde tenderly carry to her lips faded knots of flowers that came to her no one knew whence, and which she soon concealed in her bosom. And the same observant person might have remarked that when Dieudonné gave his hand to Mathilde to execute with her the figures of the dance, Dieudonné grew pale, Mathilde blushed, and a nervous thrill seemed to pervade their two beings like an electric current. Finally, this same observant person — mind, no longer having the scene limited to the one path by which both formerly entered the park — could follow with the eye the one going to the right, the other to the left; and after having seen them enter opposite sides of the wood, he would have observed that they met near a charming stream of water, whose gentle rippling made an adorable accompaniment to the song of a nightingale that had built her nest near the margin of the rill.

The day on which he attained his eighteenth year — and Mathilde, consequently, her sixteenth — Dieudonné entered his aunt's room, performed the three salutes which his aunt had taught him in case he should be presented to the Grande-Duchesse Stephanie of Baden, or to Queen Louise of Prussia, and solemnly asked Madame de Beauterne when he could be united in marriage with Mademoiselle Mathilde de Florsheim.

The canoness was suddenly seized with one of those fits of merriment which with her possessed the dangerous feature of being so violent as almost always to end in a fit of coughing; then, when she had laughed till the tears ran, and had coughed herself into a spasm, — Dieudonné, meanwhile, in the third position of the minuet, gravely awaiting her reply, — she told him there was no haste; that children of eighteen still had at least four or five years before they need trouble themselves about that sort of thing; and that when it should be time to think of it, the young man's ideas would perhaps be found to have undergone great changes on the subject of marriage.

Dieudonné, like a well-trained nephew, made no reply and withdrew, respectfully saluting his aunt; but although nothing unusual happened that evening, on the next morning, when Madame de Beauterne's maid entered the young gentleman's room to take him the traditional coffee and cream, she found the room empty and the bed quite untouched. Thoroughly frightened, she ran to announce the incredible news to her mistress. At the very instant when she was the third time repeating to Madame de Beauterne, "I assure you, madame, Monsieur le Chevalier has not slept in his bed," — Madame de Florsheim was announced.

Madame de Florsheim, very pale and greatly alarmed,

came to confide to Madame de Beauterne that her niece Mathilde had disappeared during the night.

The young people's offence, as attested by those two untouched beds, was as patent as if one had seen their two heads upon the same pillow.

In an instant the double flight was rumored abroad, and there followed a great flurry in the sisterhood. The two aunts were naturally the ones most afflicted; they prayed and wept. Their companions added fuel to the fire, without reflecting that their harvest-time had come, that was all, and that they were reaping what they had sown.

Finally one of them ventured upon the advice that, as weeping and wailing availed nothing, they had better begin without delay the pursuit of the fugitives. The counsel seemed good, and it was acted upon.

Both were much too inexperienced to have employed any great artifice to conceal their traces; and on the morrow the emissaries sent in pursuit had brought back the runaways. The two strayed lambs re-entered the fold.

But this was not a sufficient dénouement, and Madame de Florsheim implored one that should suitably repair the breach made in the honor of her house in the person of her niece. Madame de Beauterne absolutely refused it.

The latter had preserved in France a considerable estate; consequently, she did not consider it sufficient that the heir of all this wealth should be allied with one of the most illustrious families of Bavaria; she demanded that a *dot* should be added to that honor; and, as the Florsheims had excellent reasons for failing to comply with Madame de Beauterne's exaction, the old lady insistently declared that matters should remain *in statu quo*, and that they should pass the sponge, if not

of forgetfulness, at least of forgiveness, over the past. It had been, she asserted, only one of the little events of childhood, of no consequence, and encouraged by Madame de Florsheim with the entire community.

Madame de Beauterne could guarantee, on her own honor, that Dieudonné was too pious, too well brought up, and, especially, too young, for any inconvenience to result from this *tête-à-tête* journey to Munich with his little friend, — for it was in Munich, we forgot to say, that the two children had been found. But a few months after that time, although the two young people had been carefully kept apart since their return, it was clearly proven to Madame de Beauterne that she had been much too rash in pledging honor for honor in the matter of her nephew's innocence.

The affair was so serious that, at the request of Madame de Florsheim, Madame de Beauterne's confessor thought it best to interfere. At last, convinced by the representations of the reverend director of her conscience, Madame de Beauterne, in order to acquire title to the gratitude of the young people, appeared to yield solely to their tears and prayers, and, to the great joy of the community of canonesses, marriage came to sanctify this love which they had reason to regard as their work.

The new household was established in a little villa in the suburbs, where, patronized by the canonesses, who followed all its phases with the curious, meddlesome, and jealous eagerness of as many mothers-in-law, the honeymoon threatened to last forever.

The death of Madame de Beauterne was the first cloud that overcast this happiness. The good lady left thirty thousand livres of rent to her nephew; but to his credit, let us say, neither that considerable fortune nor the conjugation of the verb *to love*, which occupied his whole time,

prevented his shedding some sincere and pious tears in honor of the memory of his second mother.

In truth, Dieudonné, arrived at manhood, had attained the probationary age of twenty years without evincing any alteration in the sweetness and ingenuousness which had characterized his childhood. He had preserved his springs of infinite tenderness and universal sympathy; but these sentiments were imbued with a certain tinge of sadness and melancholy, probably born with him, and a result of the events attending his birth. He presented the singular spectacle of a young man possessed of neither tastes nor desires. The catechism had taught him the names of the passions, but growing up, he had forgotten them; devotedly in love, absorbed by Mathilde and in Mathilde, he lent himself with admirable docility to the little caprices of his wife, only a degree more awakened than he, and to whom must have been due at least half, if not three-fourths, of that episode of the flight. However, her caprices, obeyed as soon as manifested, confined to the narrow limits in which they lived, led to no disturbance, no shadow, no trouble in an existence worthy of the golden age.

Never had the Chevalier de la Graverie cast a curious glance over the walls which bounded his earthly paradise. Instinctively, without rendering himself a reason therefor, he was afraid of the world; the outside tumult caused him a shudder, and he escaped it as well as he could, stopping his ears by day and drawing the blanket over his eyes by night. And so he was wholly overwhelmed when, already shocked by the death of his aunt, and scarcely yet recovered from his grief, a letter came to him, postmarked at Paris, and signed by the Baron de la Graverie.

Dieudonné had heard his eldest brother spoken of only

on the occasion of his marriage and through the medium of his aunt.

We have said that Dieudonné stopped his ears so as not to hear the outer tumults. It may be judged whether he had his ears well stopped: he had scarcely heard the uproar made by Napoleon's first fall from the throne, and had not at all heard that made by his second. The French army had maintained a running fight across all Germany; the German, Austrian, and Russian armies had followed it; the human flood broke against the very corner of the convent, parting to right and left, and, sheltered by that steadfast craft, Dieudonné had not felt the shock of the living waves.

The Baron de la Graverie now informed his younger brother of all of which he was ignorant; that is to say, that the Restoration had brought back to France the princes of the House of Bourbon; and he pointed out to Dieudonné the necessity of performing one of the duties of his rank in hastening to rally around the throne.

It goes without saying that Dieudonné's first impulse was to refuse. He cursed Louis XI., not for having executed Nemours and Saint-Pol, not for having assassinated Count d'Armagnac, not for having inspired his father, the poor Charles VII., with such terrors that the latter allowed himself to die of hunger through fear of being poisoned, — but for having invented the post!

We have said that Dieudonné was poorly informed, so poorly that he confounded the stage-post with the letter-post; but in truth both sprang from Louis XI., the one being an outgrowth of the other. He even fell into such dejection that Madame de la Graverie, who at that moment opened the door, saw his uplifted hands and heard him exclaim, —

"Why was I not born on Robinson Crusoe's island?"

She understood that something very disastrous must have overtaken her husband's affairs, that he should hazard such a gesture or give utterance to such a wish. She was then for a moment dismayed at the misfortune which could have wrested from her spouse such an exaggerated gesture, such a misanthropic outburst.

Dieudonné gave her the letter with the air of Talma, as Manlius, handing Servilius the letter revealing his treason.

Madame de la Graverie read the letter without at all appearing to share her husband's grief at the prospect of a journey, or his apprehensions with respect to the world at large. In the midst of the cloistered severity of her education, Mathilde had heard those old gossips, all of aristocratic birth, speak not only of the court of France prior to 1789, pray understand, but of all other courts also as being veritable regions of delight; and her inherently coquettish instinct impelled her to desire to shine thereat. She had twenty reasons, without once avowing that she herself wished it, — she had twenty reasons proving to her husband that he must obey the behests of the head of his family; nor did it need so many to convince a man accustomed to listen to Mathilde's words as a Greek to the Delphic oracle.

The young couple decided, then, upon flitting from the charming nest in which their love had been sheltered, and they set out for France in July in the year 1814.

With the first stage began the tribulations of the Chevalier de la Graverie. In the motion of the carriage, in the joy of contemplating new places and things, Mathilde encountered her first distractions, and ceased to perform so conscientiously her part in the duet of lyric tenderness chanted by Dieudonné from morn to eve. Dieudonné very quickly perceived this, and his soul,

impressible to excess, was grievously afflicted. It was, then, in a sufficiently sad state of mind that he arrived at Paris, and having scanned the baron's address at the foot of the letter which had been the unhappy cause of all this derangement, he presented himself before his elder brother, who, true aristocrat as he was, had established himself at Number 4 Rue de Varennes, Faubourg Saint-Germain.

The Baron de la Graverie was nearly nineteen years older than his brother. He was born under the monarchy, in the very year of Louis XVI.'s advent to the throne. In 1784 he had established his claims, and was entered as a page of the royal household. In 1789, after the taking of the Bastille, he had emigrated with his uncle.

Having never seen his brother, the result was he did not cherish a profound affection for him. In place of affection existed a keen feeling of jealousy; for, alas, as will appear in the sequel, the Baron de la Graverie was not perfect.

Returning penniless from exile after having undergone a thousand perils, he could not for his part forgive his younger brother's having inherited the Canoness de Beauterne's entire fortune, — a fortune to which as senior he claimed to have rights superior to those of a younger brother. How had his brother won this fortune? By paying court to twenty old women in the shade of a convent. Had the cadet become a Knight of Malta, as was his duty according to the baron's ideas, he might perhaps have pardoned what he called the usurpation of his inheritance. But Dieudonné, on the contrary, had married; and the baron regarded it as wholly unbecoming that a younger brother, that is to say, a person belonging, in his estimation, to the neuter gender, should have

dreamed of taking a wife, thus depriving the sons of the elder of a fortune which, since it had been stolen from the father, should at least be restored to the children.

Therefore, at the first interview, the baron expounded his views on the subject to the chevalier; and he added, with marvellous aplomb, that Providence having already brought about one miscarriage for Madame de la Graverie, would refuse — he hoped so, at least — to grant any progeny whatever to this contraband household, and would, sooner or later, return to the elder branch of the family what incontestably belonged to it, — the inheritance from the canoness.

This exordium exasperated Madame de la Graverie, who had accompanied her husband to the baron's house, and extracted two great tears from the eyes of Dieudonné. Like the excellent father he felt it in his power to be, he wept for his posterity, condemned by the baron to non-existence. He regarded alternately his wife and his brother, seeming to ask the latter how he could reproach Mathilde, so pretty, so good, so loving. Were not the charms with which his young wife was endowed, and which his love doubled, tripled, quadrupled, — were they not, then, a sufficient justification? Or had the baron, like Alceste, sworn to an eternal hatred of women?

But, returning to himself, reflecting that he who had remained in France, who had encountered none of the dangers of war, none of misfortunes of emigration, — reflecting that he was rich, while his brother had brought back from exile only his sword and epaulets, he hesitated for a moment, and asked himself if, in truth, by accepting the inheritance of his aunt Beauterne, he had not been guilty of a misdemeanor.

Thereupon, not wishing the trouble of thinking it over, and without perceiving the signs of opposition exhibited

by the sweet Mathilde, who was not satisfied, like Saint Martin, with the half of a cloak, — he asked his senior's forgiveness for the fault whose consequences he had but just learned, and at the same time demanded that the baron should accept a half of the fortune of the canoness; and he desired to make over the gift the same day.

To which the baron consented without being urged.

VI.

THE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE OF THE GRAY MUSKETEERS.

However arid his heart, the Baron de la Graverie seemed touched by his brother's generosity; and when the deed of gift, drawn up by the baron's notary, had been signed and sealed by the chevalier, the baron opened his arms with an expansion in which he almost forgot his dignity as the head of the family. The chevalier cast himself into them, dissolved in tears, more grateful for this simple paternal demonstration than the baron was for the fifteen thousand livres into possession of which he had just come, and which, with what he already possessed, afforded him an income of exactly fifteen thousand francs.

For his part, the baron declared, after the embrace given and received, that for the future he should regard and love Dieudonné as his own son, and that he should with the most anxious solicitude charge himself with his fortunes at court. Resolved upon giving him an undeniable proof of this, he demanded a commission for him in the Gray Musketeers, and, thinking to arrange the most delightful of surprises, said not a word of his intentions.

As a result, one evening on sitting down to dinner, Dieudonné found under his napkin a commission signed "Louis," which admitted him to the honor of membership in that privileged corps. It was indeed a great honor;

the young men of the first families of France begged to enter what was at that time called *La Maison Rouge.* The Black Musketeers, like the Gray Musketeers, wore red uniforms, their designations arising from the color of their horses rather than from that of their coats; each musketeer also ranked as a lieutenant.

But, great as the honor was, we are compelled to avow that since the receipt of the letter which had torn him from the delights of his hermitage, Monsieur de la Graverie had experienced no shock more disagreeable than the one he felt at the sight of that parchment. He was seized with a dazzling vertigo, and a cold perspiration broke out upon him. With an energy no one could have expected from a character so easy and debonair, he repelled the honor, and defended himself by stormy arguments, — the best of which unquestionably was, that, quite unlike D'Artagnan, his illustrious predecessor, he had no sort of liking for the cassock.

The Baron de la Graverie learned of this refusal from a letter written by the chevalier *ab irato.* He went into a majestic rage; the chevalier's non-acceptance compromised him seriously, as he had used his utmost influence to obtain the king's precious signature. And now, for a La Graverie to declare himself unable to perform any military duty whatever was to render him, the baron, the laughing-stock of the court. He thereupon replied to his brother that, willing or unwilling, he must don the cassock; and he wrote the king that the chevalier was so grateful for the favor granted that, not knowing in what terms to tender his thanks, he had commissioned the baron to express to his Majesty the depth of his gratitude.

There was no retreat for the unhappy Dieudonné. The baron had accepted, and tendered thanks in his name.

Dieudonné held the family hierarchy in profound respect. He did more than to love the brother who had taken upon himself all the discomforts and hardships of life, leaving him only its pleasures; and in spite of having yielded up the half of his inheritance, which he did not for a single moment regret, let us hasten to say, he sometimes asked himself if he were not wronging his elder brother in withholding the other half. The charge of ingratitude which the baron had just brought against him in person, — for on the rare occasions when he had fault to find with his brother, the baron accorded himself the satisfaction of doing so by the living voice, — the charge of ingratitude, we repeat, so keenly touched Dieudonné that, knowing not what to say, he remained absolutely mute.

Madame de la Graverie's eyes pleaded with her brother-in-law for mercy in behalf of her poor husband, in whose name she seemed to be making a pledge. In fact, Mathilde had not yet had time to rid herself of her German through friction with French society, and she regarded Dieudonné as the Antinoüs of the nineteenth century, and doubted not that a uniform as elegant as that of the Musketeers would heighten the charms she supposed him to possess; she therefore decided to reinforce by conjugal coquetry the arguments of her brother-in-law.

For that matter, the arguments did not require reinforcement, since the baron had replied, and given thanks in Dieudonné's name.

Dieudonné, whether he wished it or not, was then, for good and all, a Musketeer, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, and subordinate henceforth to the Maréchal Duc de Raguse, commander-in-chief of the king's house, Musketeers, and body-guard. Eight

days later, in fact, the unhappy chevalier assumed the uniform with the resignation and good grace of the little dog tricked out in a troubadour's coat and cap to undertake his performances on the tight rope.

The uniform was magnificent, especially the full-dress outfit. It consisted of a red coat, white cassimere trousers, high boots reaching above the knee, a helmet with tossing crest, and a cuirass displaying a cross rayed with gold.

But poor Dieudonné was greatly embarrassed in this magnificent uniform. His opinion of himself was not higher than he deserved, and he was conscious of being awkward and ridiculous under his trappings. In truth, short and chubby, he had the ruddy beardless face of a canon of St. Geneviève; pretty enough to eat in a choir-boy's surplice, he was utterly absurd in the uniform.

And yet, dressed as a bourgeois, the chevalier was not more noticeably ugly than most men make themselves; and the phrase consecrated by custom to palliate the want of grace characterizing certain individuals of the male species, "neither handsome nor homely," could have been applied to the chevalier as well as, or let us say even better than, to another. But the uniform, by investing the modest figure with pretension, emphasized all defects. When afoot, his boots seemed to start from the abdomen, as the handle of a cup-and-ball from its bowl. Then, because of his short, plump little arms, one person compared him to the penguin; another asked the first person he met after passing him: "Pray, monsieur, can you tell me the name of that red-coat?"

Yet all this was the fair side of the situation. To form an idea of the anguish that a man can suffer without dying of it, the Chevalier de la Graverie should have been seen on horseback.

At ten years of age, when the little chevalier found himself at the top of a staircase, he would call his aunt, the Canoness de Beauterne, to come and lead him down. If, perchance, at the age of fifteen, he mounted the gardener's donkey, one of his noble protectoresses invariably held the animal's head, and another the opposite extremity, in order that if the donkey should be seized by a fancy to take the bit in his teeth, the one could check him by the bridle, and the other hold him back by the tail.

Now, however assiduously the chevalier might apply himself to lessons in riding, whatever patience he might display in mastering the theory, it was impossible for his round, inflexible members to lend themselves at once to the movements of his horse. Chosen by his brother, although the chevalier had asked for a very gentle horse, our hero's steed was a racer and a war-horse, without a fault, but full-blooded and mettlesome. The chevalier had demanded that his horse should stand as low as possible, but there was a prescribed standard of height for the horses belonging to the king's household, — musketeers, life-guards, or light-horse, — below which they were not accepted.

Now, the chevalier, who experienced dizziness if he but looked downward from the summit of a flight of motionless stone steps, might well be attacked by a vertigo on finding himself in the saddle of a frisky and vigorous horse. Perched upon Bayard — the name which the baron had thought proper to bestow on his brother's steed, in honor of the horse belonging to Aymon's four sons — with about the same degree of stability and grace as that exhibited by a sack of flour when perched on a mule's back, the chevalier kept his position, the greater part of the time, only by a miracle of equipoise, and, on

trying occasions, by the kindly co-operation of his comrades to the right and left. Had not the weight of his person been respectable, twenty times, at an unexpected command to halt, he would have broken rank by pitching over his animal's head.

Happily for the chevalier, his gentleness, his obliging disposition, and his humility touched his comrades, who were ashamed to take for a butt of ridicule a being so inoffensive, although, thanks to their aid, if he had possessed the least bit of conceit, nothing could have prevented his looking upon himself as the most brilliant cavalier of his corps. But it was quite the reverse, and Dieudonné found himself so ill at ease under the beautiful embroidered cross displayed on his uniform that he would have thrown his red coat to the dogs, had he not dreaded his wife's chagrin and his brother's anger.

One thing especially terrified him: on some day or other his turn would come to serve as one of the king's escort. There would then be no riding in the ranks; they galloped along with the carriage each on his own account. And the king took his airing with hopeless regularity; he was a man of very regular habits, was King Louis XVIII. He never did one thing one day that he had not done the day before; which must greatly have simplified the work of the modern Dangeau, — if Louis XVIII. had, like his illustrious predecessor and grandfather, a Dangeau.

Now, from his re-entrance into Paris, May 3, 1814, until his death, December 25, 1824, — pardon me if I am mistaken as to a day or so, as I have not at hand the "Art of Verifying Dates," — this is the way the king passed every day. He rose at seven o'clock in the morning, and received the groom of the stole or Monsieur de Blacas at eight o'clock; at nine, he gave audience on

matters of business; at ten, he breakfasted with his household and the personages authorized once for all to breakfast with him, — namely, the incumbents of the highest offices, and the captains of the troops of the king's household; after the breakfast, which at first lasted but twenty-five minutes, but which ended by lasting three-quarters of an hour, and at which the Duchesse d'Angoulême and one or two of her ladies always assisted, they entered the king's cabinet and engaged in conversation; at five minutes to eleven, never earlier, never later, the duchess withdrew, and then some doubtful story held in reserve would be told by the king to enliven his auditors; at ten minutes past eleven, or a little later, all were dismissed, and the time until noon was occupied by special audiences. At noon, the king with his cortège — often composed of more than twenty people, never of less — went to hear mass; on his return, he received his ministers or held his council, which took place once a week; after the council, he spent an hour or two in writing or reading, or in drawing house-plans, which he immediately threw into the fire; at three or four o'clock, according to the season, he went for a drive, going four, five, or even ten leagues in a great berlin, over paved roads, his horses running at full speed. At ten minutes to six, he returned to the Tuileries; at six, he dined with his family, ate much and with discrimination, making legitimate pretensions to the title of epicure. The royal family remained together until eight o'clock; at eight, all who had a right to enter the king's presence without preliminary appointment could ask to be admitted, and were received in turn. At nine o'clock, his Majesty came forth and passed to the council hall, where he issued orders for the palace; a few were privileged to enter at this time and profit by the opportunity afforded

to pay court to the king; twenty minutes later, he withdrew to his chamber and annotated Horace, or read Virgil or Racine; and at eleven o'clock he went to bed.

When Madame du Cayla and Monsieur de Cases were in favor, Madame du Cayla came on Wednesdays after the council, and remained two or three hours alone with the king. As for Monsieur de Cases, his turn came in the evening; he entered the king's chamber at the same time as his Majesty, remaining there alone with him, and leaving only a quarter of an hour before he went to bed.

Near the middle of this long list of small duties imposed by the king upon himself, and performed with religious punctuality, one single paragraph riveted the attention of Monsieur de la Graverie, cadet. It was this: —

"Every day, be the weather good or bad, his Majesty will go out, and will remain out from three o'clock until a quarter to six."

The king's household furnished the escorts for the drives, — the Maison Rouge, like the others. But the king's household was large; so each one's turn came only once a month. Chance decreed that the chevalier should have twenty days in which to await his turn.

It came at last. It was a cruel day! Mathilde and the baron were in ecstasies; they hoped, the one that his brother, the other that her husband, would be marked by the king. At the least scintillation, the nebula might become a star. Alas! the poor star-to-be was hidden under a terrible cloud, — a cloud of fear.

As the day had come, so came the hour; the escort waited in the court. The king descended, and, according to custom, he was scarcely in his carriage before the horses were off at a gallop.

Whoever had cast a glance in the direction of the Chevalier de la Graverie would have seen him so pale as to excite pity. He was wholly incapable of directing his horse; but by good chance, the animal was as well trained as the master was badly, and the horse directed the master. The intelligent animal seemed to understand it all, and took his place of his own accord; nor did he leave it.

We do not have to record that the pommel of the saddle was resorted to; one hand held the bridle, the other the sabre. The chevalier, in fancy, saw himself falling, and spitted upon his own blade; and it occasioned him such anguish that he kept his body as far as possible from his sabre, and his hand from his body.

That day the course was enormously long; they made the tour of half of Paris, having set out from the Barrière de l'Étoile and re-entered by the Barrière du Trône. A good horseman would have been lame; the Chevalier de la Graverie was as if he had been broken on the wheel. Although it was in the month of January, the perspiration poured from his brow, and his shirt was as wet as if it had been dipped in the Seine. He threw the reins to his groom, and instead of dining at the palace with his comrades, as usual, he leaped into a fiacre, and in a few moments he had reached Number 10 Rue de l'Université. Short as the distance was, he had not the courage to walk it.

At the first sight of him Mathilde uttered a cry; he looked ten years older.

The chevalier had his bed warmed, lay down in it, nor did he rise for three days, and for a fortnight he complained of pain in every part of his body.

Alas! far distant was the tranquil existence of the little Bavarian villa, with its long *tête-à-têtes* interspersed

with caresses; its charming walks at twilight, in the edge of the wood and along the river-bank, — walks in which the silences of the wedded pair were as eloquent of love as the tenderest caresses, so complete was the fusion of their souls. There could be no more of egoistic insulation in the midst of the indifferent, no more fireside communions spent in planning for themselves a quiet old age *à la* Philemon and Baucis.

The worst that came of all this — and the attack of lumbago helped a long way toward the conviction — was that Madame de la Graverie found herself compelled to recognize the fact that her chevalier was not, upon comparison, quite so superior to other men as she had until then supposed.

It is a fatal moment for love, and a terrible menace to conjugal fidelity, when the wife admits a suspicion that the Creator could not positively have rested from his labors after having fashioned expressly for her the object which, till then, she had made her idol. A husband having reached the status of legal tender has thereafter only a forced circulation.

Not that we are willing to say that Mathilde ceased to love her husband from the day on which she made the fatal discovery; on the contrary, the care which she bestowed on him in private during the indisposition following that unhappy duty of escort was nothing compared with the attention she lavished on him in public: certain prudes even qualified as indecent the tenderness which the young German did not fear to display toward Monsieur de la Graverie. Yet, to be faithful to the truth in every respect, we must confess that when they were alone Mathilde opened her mouth only to yawn, and that her engagements and duties as a fashionable woman began strangely to multiply day by day.

It goes without saying that the Chevalier de la Graverie perceived nothing that could cause him to suspect himself to be other than the most fortunate of men. He saw the petting to which he had been accustomed from childhood continued after his marriage; and, by degrees, he came to regard as very simple and very natural the extraordinary attentions showered upon him by Mathilde, and to think that it was indeed the least and best that she could do.

Monsieur de la Graverie would most certainly have been the happiest of husbands, had it not been for the unlucky chance that he was at the same time a husband and a Gray Musketeer. That terrible duty of escort, coming once a month, hung suspended over his head like a sword of Damocles, and threatened his happiest moments.

VII.

IN WHICH OCCURS AN EVENT WHICH RELIEVES THE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE FROM DUTY AS ESCORT FOR THREE MONTHS.

The month of February glided away as the month of January had done; the chevalier's turn as escort came again. The same agonies were endured, but this time they were better justified. Held badly in hand, the Musketeer's horse stumbled and fell. Monsieur de la Graverie pitched over his head, struck upon the pavement, and sprained his shoulder. He was carried to his home, almost happy at escaping so lightly.

The chevalier's accident was rumored abroad. All who stood high at court left cards, or visited him in person. Three times the king asked for news of him.

The baron was overwhelmed with joy. "Understand how to take advantage of this affair," said he, "and your fortune is made."

The chevalier asked nothing better than to take advantage of the affair, provided he had not to do so on horseback. Although in private he could withdraw his arm from its sling; although when alone he shook his fist before the mirror at some unknown person who might easily have been the baron; although when he essayed to clasp his wife to his heart, he found the sprained arm as strong as the other, — yet, in presence of those who came to inquire after his health, in the pres-

ence of the officers of the king's household who came to visit him, he voluntarily or involuntarily feigned obstinate pain, and made diabolical grimaces at every motion communicated to his arm. He hoped thus to juggle away at least one turn of escort duty. Consequently, he not only did not appear on the street, but he did not leave his room; and he left his bed only to be propped in a great easy-chair, experiencing anew that felicity of *tête-à-têtes* he thought forever lost.

In fact, while the chevalier read the papers, and particularly the "Moniteur," in whose placidity he encountered something akin to his own nature, Mathilde, seated near him, applied herself to some kind of needle-work, yawning enough to dislocate her jaws; but each time that she yawned she concealed the uncomely act from her husband by elevating her needle-work to the height of her face and yawning behind the cloth.

On the morning of the seventeenth day of March, Mathilde was working at her embroidery, and the chevalier, outstretched in his easy-chair and reading the "Moniteur," came upon the following: —

"PROCLAMATION.

"On the thirty-first day of December last we adjourned the chambers, to resume their sittings on the first day of May; during this time we have devoted ourselves without relaxation to all that could insure public tranquillity and the happiness of our people — "

"Yes, that is very true," murmured the chevalier; "and for my part I have but one reproach for the king, — these daily sorties, and his mania for being accompanied by an escort." Then he resumed: —

"This tranquillity is menaced; this happiness may be jeopardized through malevolence and treason."

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed the chevalier; "do you hear that, Mathilde?"

"Yes," replied Mathilde, stifling a yawn, "I hear: 'through malevolence and treason,' — only, I do not understand."

"Neither do I," responded the chevalier; "but we shall find out." And he continued: —

"If the country's enemies have founded their hopes upon the dissensions which they have always sought to foment, her friends, her lawful defenders, will overthrow their criminal desires by the unassailable force of an indestructible union."

"Certainly," interpolated the chevalier, "we shall overthrow their criminal desires; and I shall be the very first, if my arm gets better."

Then turning towards Mathilde, he exclaimed, "How well the king writes! does he not, darling?"

"Yes," answered Mathilde, without parting her teeth, fearful, should she do so, of no longer being mistress of her jaws.

"The 'Moniteur,' is interesting to-day," remarked the chevalier. And he proceeded: —

"For these reasons, having heard the report of our beloved and loyal Chancellor of France, Monsieur Dambray, Commander of our Knighthood, we have ordered and do order as follows:" —

"Ah! ejaculated the chevalier; "let us see what the king orders."

"Article I. The chamber of peers and the chamber of deputies of departments are convoked in their usual places of assembling.

"ARTICLE II. The peers and the deputies now absent from Paris will return thither as soon as they have knowledge of this present proclamation.

"Given at the Palace of the Tuileries, March 6, 1815, in the twentieth year of our reign.

"[Signed] LOUIS."

"That is strange," said the chevalier; "the king convokes the chambers and does not say why he convokes them."

"You have always promised to take me to a session, to amuse me, Dieudonné," said Mathilde.

"I will take you," returned the chevalier.

"Ah! that will be very diverting," remarked Mathilde, yawning enough to split her mouth in anticipation of the pleasure to be derived from the visit.

"Ah! but listen now," cried the chevalier: "'Ordinance,' there is an ordinance; the ordinance will explain it all, doubtless." And he read: —

"ORDINANCE.

"Upon the statement of our beloved and loyal chevalier, Monsieur Dambray, Chancellor of France and Commander of our Knighthood, we have ordered and do order, have declared and do declare, as follows: —

"ARTICLE I. Napoleon Bonaparte is declared a traitor and a rebel, having by force of arms entered the department of the Var."

"Tut, tut, tut! What is the 'Moniteur' saying? Are you listening, Mathilde?"

"'Traitor and rebel, having by force of arms entered the department of the Var;' but who is the traitor and rebel?"

"Why, Napoleon Bonaparte, *sac-à-papier!* But didn't they shut him up on an island?"

"Certainly they did," said Mathilde, "the Island of Elba."

"Well, then, he could not get into the department of the Var unless there is a bridge leading from the Island of Elba to the aforesaid department. Let us proceed, let us proceed!"

"It is therefore enjoined upon all governors, commanders of armed troops, national guards, civil authorities, and private citizens to fall upon him — "

"I really hope you will keep quiet, and not amuse yourself by falling upon him," said Mathilde.

"That is not all. Listen now, listen!" And the chevalier resumed: —

"— to fall upon him, arrest him, and bring him forthwith before a council of war, which, having established his identity, shall pronounce against him the penalties fixed by law."

At that moment the chevalier's reading was interrupted by the opening of his chamber door, and his servant's voice announcing the Baron de la Graverie.

The baron was armed and equipped for war, like Malbrouck. The chevalier grew pale at his formidable appearance.

"Well," inquired the baron, "do you know what has happened?"

"I have some idea of it."

"The ogre of Corsica has left his island, and has landed at the Juan Gulf."

"The Juan Gulf! Where is that?"

"It is a little harbor about two leagues from Antibes."

"From Antibes?"

"Yes, and I have come for you."

"For me? Me! what for?"

"Why, have n't you seen that it is enjoined upon all

commanders of troops, national guards, civil authorities, and private citizens even, to pursue him? Well, I have come for you to go in his pursuit."

The chevalier turned to Mathilde with an air of entreaty; he humbly recognized her mind to be more active in all emergencies than his, and he counted upon her to extricate him from this one.

Mathilde understood the signal of distress. "But it seems to me, brother, that you have forgotten one thing," she said, addressing the baron.

"And what is that?"

"That although you are free to take your sword and go in pursuit of whom you will, Dieudonné is not."

"Why is he not?"

"Dieudonné belongs to the king's household, and he must do whatever the king's household does. To leave Paris at this time, even to pursue Napoleon, would be desertion."

The baron bit his lip. "Ah! it seems that you are Dieudonné's major-general."

"No," replied Mathilde, simply, "the Duc de Raguse is, I think, Dieudonné's major-general."

And she tranquilly took up her embroidery, while the chevalier beamed upon her with admiration.

"Very well; be it so," said the baron; "I will go without him."

"And the honor will be yours,. and yours alone," answered Mathilde.

The baron cast a look of hatred at the young wife, and departed.

"What do you think of my brother's visit?" asked Dieudonné, still trembling.

"Why, I think that after getting possession of half of your fortune, he would not be sorry, perhaps, to get you killed in order to inherit the rest of it."

Dieudonné made a grimace that signified, "You may be right." He then went to Mathilde and embraced her, straining her so closely to his heart as to stifle her, unmindful that he had seized her with the helpless arm.

During the entire day the chevalier's house was thronged. Each visitor spoke of the strange event; no one doubted that Napoleon would be captured and shot before he had advanced ten leagues.

But to the question twenty times addressed to the chevalier in the course of the day, "And you, what are you going to do?" the chevalier invariably replied: "I belong to the king's household; I must do whatever is done by the king's household."

Which was accepted by each as a very suitable response.

Every visitor, moreover, had met the baron with his great sword, and every one knew that he was prepared to march against the ogre of Corsica.

On the same day, at about two o'clock, it was learned that the Comte d'Artois had set out for Lyons, and the Duc de Bourbon for La Vendée. In response to this double piece of news, Dieudonné announced, with frightful grimaces, that his arm was giving him insupportable pain.

On the eighth and the ninth, the news was vague. The baron was encountered everywhere; he was only wanting to advance against Napoleon as soon as he knew exactly where he could be found.

Aside from the pain experienced from his arm, Dieudonné enjoyed great tranquillity. Whence came his philosophy? Was he of the school of the Stoics? No; a thought had occurred to him, and it lurked in the depths of his soul with selfish obstinacy. We hardly dare confess what that thought was.

La Rochefoucauld has said that in the misfortunes of even our dearest friend there is always something that is not unpleasant to us. It might be added that in the greatest political reverses, in the midst of the catastrophes which overthrow sceptres, crowns, and thrones, there is always some little thing that is the cause of our bearing no excessive ill-will towards the overthrowing agent.

Dieudonné had foreseen that if Napoleon mounted the throne, Louis XVIII. would leave Paris; that Louis XVIII., leaving Paris, would no longer drive from three o'clock to six; and that, Louis XVIII. no longer taking his drive, the service of the escort would be abolished. Then no more anguish during one entire day, no more dread during the other thirty!

Great Heaven! what an idea for a man to harbor! The chevalier had at first thrust the thought from him as unworthy; then little by little it had returned to the charge, and having penetrated his brain it would not yield. The result was that when Dieudonné read in the "Moniteur," on the ninth, of Napoleon's probable entry into Lyons on the tenth, he was not so greatly depressed by the news as one might have expected him to be.

Now that he knew where Napoleon was to be found, the baron announced his intention of setting out without fail on the eleventh or twelfth; that is to say, as soon as his entrance into the second capital of the realm should be confirmed.

On the fifteenth, it was rumored that the Duc de Raguse had prevailed on the king to fortify the Tuileries, and shut himself in with the ministers, the chambers, and all his military household. The Tuileries would hold three thousand men.

The baron had just brought this news to his brother,

saying that he particularly hoped to see him form a part of the garrison.

"I thought you had been gone since the eleventh," returned Dieudonné.

"I was about to set out, indeed," said the baron, "when it occurred to me that there are two routes between Paris and Lyons, — the one by Burgundy, and that by Nivernais. I feared to take one route lest the usurper should take the other."

"A very good reason," remarked Mathilde.

"Yes; and I do not understand why my brother does not put himself at the disposition of the king."

"It is just what he is about to do," said Mathilde; and she took pen, ink, and paper.

"What are you doing?" demanded the baron.

"I am writing, as you see."

"To whom?"

"To the Duc de Raguse."

"What?"

"That my husband places himself at the disposition of the king."

"Dieudonné, then, does not know how to write?"

"Not when his right arm is sprained."

And Mathilde wrote: —

Monsieur le Maréchal:

My husband, the Chevalier de la Graverie, although his arm is so seriously injured that I am compelled to write in his stead, has the honor to remind you that he forms a part of the king's household. Whatever you may decide upon, he asks to share the dangers of his comrades.

His devotion to his Majesty will serve him instead of strength.

He has the honor to be, Monsieur le Maréchal, etc., etc.

"Will this answer?" Mathilde asked the baron.

"Yes," answered the furious baron, "perfectly; and Dieudonné is very fortunate to have a wife like you."

"Ah," said Dieudonné, naïvely, "how often I have told you that she is a treasure!"

The baron withdrew, saying that he was going to learn the news.

Mathilde sent her letter to the Tuileries.

On the nineteenth, at nine o'clock in the morning, it was learned at Paris that Napoleon had entered Auxerre on the seventeenth, and that he was continuing his march toward the capital. At eleven o'clock, the king, who had rejected the plan of the Duc de Raguse, called for the marshal and said to him: —

"I leave Paris at noon; give orders accordingly to my military household."

The Duc de Raguse issued his orders.

At noon, an aide-de-camp from the marshal was announced at Monsieur de la Graverie's. The marshal responded directly to Madame de la Graverie that the king, knowing of the serious accident which had confined Monsieur de la Graverie to his room, and recognizing his devotion to the monarchy, granted him permission to remain at home, being assured that if he were not present upon this trying occasion, it would be due to the injury which had been received in his Majesty's service.

"Thank you, monsieur," replied Mathilde to the aide-de-camp; "say to Monsieur le Maréchal that Monsieur de la Graverie will be at the palace in one hour."

Dieudonné stared. The aide-de-camp, amazed at this heroine, saluted her admiringly, and withdrew. Mathilde handed the letter to Dieudonné.

"But," said he, "the king has given me leave, it seems to me."

"Yes," replied Mathilde, "but it is a favor that a gentleman cannot accept. You must accompany the king in his retreat as far as the boundaries of France if you can possibly cling to your horse."

Monsieur de la Graverie was a man of correct ideas. "You are right, Mathilde," was his reply.

Then, with a voice such as Cæsar might have used for the same command, he issued the order: "My armor, and my war-horse!"

An hour later, the Chevalier de la Graverie was at the Tuileries.

The king set off at midnight.

On arriving at Ypres, the king saw and recognized him; the chevalier was the third left to him. The king produced three crosses of the order of Saint Louis, and with his own hands attached them to the uniforms of the faithful three. He then dismissed and sent them back into France, assuring them that he hoped soon to meet them there.

The chevalier had made almost a hundred leagues on horseback; he had had enough of it. He sold his horse at half his value, took the diligence, and returned to Paris. It is impossible to convey to the reader any idea of the majesty of the gesture with which he displayed the cross of Saint Louis to Mathilde.

Mathilde was radiant.

Dieudonné asked for news of his brother. The baron had at last set off, on the seventeenth. Only, he had set off for Belgium, not wishing to remain at Paris, compromised as he was by the bellicose disposition that he had imprudently manifested.

VIII.

IN WHICH THE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE FORMS NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

The events following the return from the Island of Elba are well known.

Dieudonné, upon returning to his apartments in the Rue de l'Université, hung his cross of Saint Louis over the head of his wife's bed in acknowledgment of the fact that he owed it to her.

Dieudonné had no cause for uneasiness during the Hundred Days. He was the happiest man in the world. He was a Knight of Saint Louis, and he was not a Musketeer!

The second Restoration came about; the baron returned in the train of the Bourbons, and reinstalled himself in his apartments in the Rue de Varennes. Nevertheless, he did not visit his brother. He regarded it as a great injustice that Dieudonné had been decorated, and that he had not.

As a result of the Chevalier de la Graverie's no longer having a go-between, he arranged his own affairs directly with the king. He succeeded in exchanging his Musketeer's sabre for the wand of a Master of Ceremonies,—an exchange that afforded him exquisite joy, the latter encumbrance, wholly civil and pacific, harmonizing with his tastes much better than the former had done.

But, once disembarrassed of his own uniform, it happened that, by an anomaly sufficiently common

among men of his temperament, the chevalier eagerly sought the society of those who wore it. He seemed to have undertaken the task of proving to all the world that his head also had worn the blessed plume, by which he had been so inconvenienced when he had the right to wear it. And so, when he was on duty at the Tuileries at dinner, he would place himself by choice among the officers of the military household, and treat them as comrades.

One day he made the acquaintance of a captain of the mounted Grenadiers, who, in accordance with the law of contrasts, pleased him at first sight.

The captain was much older than Monsieur de la Graverie, who, at this time had attained his twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth year, while but a few months would elapse before the officer would be placed by law on the retired list. His hair was gray, and premature wrinkles furrowed his brow. But in spirit, in heart, and in character Monsieur Dumesnil — which was the captain's name — was no more than twenty years old; it was remarked that there was not in the whole guard a sub-lieutenant that could vie with him in gayety, caprice, or recklessness. In all athletic exercises, so neglected by Monsieur de la Graverie, or rather by the old canonesses who had educated him, Captain Dumesnil was possessed of the highest skill. As to his courage, it was proverbial in the army.

These qualities profoundly impressed the chevalier, for the very reason that he did not possess them. He immediately decided that such a friend would be very desirable in a house somewhat dull, like his own; he hoped that he would amuse Mathilde, who became less and less responsive in *tête-à-tête;* he calculated upon reaping the benefit of the good-humor that could not fail

to inspire his wife when listening to the witty sallies of his new acquaintance. Consequently, he at once made him all the overtures that a lover would make to the woman of his choice. At the end of a few hours the friendship had gained such headway that Monsieur Dumesnil had accepted an invitation to dine at the chevalier's on the morrow, and that, too, without great urging. Besides, we must add in passing, the captain was a man that would sit down to a cover with the devil, if sure that the roast would not be too badly burned.

Without suspecting it, Monsieur de la Graverie was at that very moment in one of the most critical periods of his conjugal life. For a long time Madame de la Graverie had suffered from *ennui*. *Ennui*, with women of Mathilde's temperament, is the chill that precedes a fever. The year following the second Restoration had been very gay; the young wife found herself sated with amusements, tired of balls, surfeited with commonplace coquetry. She no longer loved pleasure for pleasure's sake; she felt the emptiness of her own heart; and Madame de la Graverie was like Nature, in that she abhorred a vacuum. Yet she continued the same, or nearly the same to her husband; habit and the influence of education had stereotyped in her the careful and attentive housekeeper. Whatever might be the course of her thoughts, she testified no less affection for Dieudonné; but in reality, the chevalier's melancholy tenderness irritated the delicacy of his wife's nervous system, and the glances she had once cast at him as love-shafts began gradually to become charged with the impatient aversion generally felt by women of her type for a husband obstinately bent upon giving not the slightest cause for complaint, and, consequently not the slightest ground for retaliation.

Now, the very day on which Monsieur de la Graverie introduced his friend of the day before into his home, the baron, revisiting Dieudonné for the first time, presented to his sister-in-law a young lieutenant of Hussars whom he commended to her favor in the highest terms. Verily, this young Hussar was one of the most charming officers to be found; he possessed a figure whose slenderness and suppleness were quite feminine, an elegant shape, a handsomely curled moustache, and a consequential air; he was, in short, an exquisite model for the advantageous exhibition in the sunlight of the gold braid of a jacket, or for sporting the *sabretache* with a swagger.

The influence of an attractive figure and a jovial humor on the health and spirits of a pretty woman has never been sufficiently accounted for, nor will it ever be accounted for. A visible improvement was manifest in the appearance of the mistress of the house from the happy day on which the lieutenant of Hussars and the captain of Grenadiers took their places at the fireside of the Chevalier de la Graverie. The paleness which had temporarily bedimmed her complexion was lost; the bluish circles which had deadened the lustre of her eyes disappeared; she again became gay, and she seasoned her conjugal attentions with a smiling air that doubled their charm and their value.

Their involuntary but visible success singularly attached to the pretty patient the two physicians in spite of themselves. They were always at her side, and before a fortnight had rolled away, they had become not merely frequent, but daily guests at the hôtel de la Graverie. They were constantly seen in her company, walking or driving; they made their entrance together at balls and theatres, — so that as soon as Madame de la Graverie appeared, one could wager that Monsieur de la Graverie

was coming behind her, and the attendant cavaliers behind Monsieur de la Graverie.

It was the most extraordinary, perhaps, but also the most charming of households. It was not a *ménage* of two, like the ordinary household; it was not a *ménage* of three, such as may be met with at every step in Italy; no, it was a *ménage* of four, in which figured Monsieur, the friend of Monsieur, and the *protégé* of Madame, with equal privileges very elegantly and very loyally shared by all three, — each receiving with scrupulous exactitude what belonged to him of smiles, of affectionate thanks and grateful glances, all three acquiring in turn the right to offer an arm to the lovely Mathilde, or to carry her fan, her shawl, or her bouquet, by way of indemnity.

The distributive justice of Madame de la Graverie was so perfect that not once did she create jealousy or discontent. But, beyond contradiction, the most satisfied of the masculine trio, the most grateful, not only to Mathilde, but to each of the others, was Dieudonné, who was unable to contain his joy when he thought that he had found two new vents by which he could pour forth the superfluity of tenderness that, to the days of his isolation, overflowed from his heart.

How did Madame de la Graverie manage to maintain such equability of temperaments and such self-abnegation in her little court? It is, we openly confess, one of those woman's secrets which we have never been able to penetrate, in spite of long-continued and repeated effort. And, most extraordinary thing of all, the world did not speak ill of this strange aggregation. The young German matron appeared to be so open, such naïveté was exhibited even in her most compromising relations with the two officers, and in all things she was so perfectly natural, that a

person would have been accused of possessing a very wicked soul had he dared to hint at the least suspicion.

The Baron de la Graverie was the angel with the flaming sword who was to chase the happy trio from their Paradise.

One afternoon Mathilde was slightly indisposed. Monsieur de Pontfarcy, the lieutenant of Hussars, was on duty; and so the Chevalier de la Graverie and his friend, the captain of Grenadiers, walked by themselves to the Champs-Élysées.

Although the ranks of the usual quartette were considerably reduced, Monsieur de la Graverie appeared to be very joyous; he skipped rather than walked, and that too, notwithstanding an *embonpoint* quite respectable, considering his age. The slightest occasion served to set him off into shouts of laughter, and he unceasingly rubbed his hands gently together; and, in obedience to the holy law of friendship, Captain Dumesnil shared in full degree his happy mood.

During their promenade their path was crossed by a man who did not seem so wholly satisfied with destiny as they appeared to be. That man was the Baron de la Graverie. He walked with mien so anxious, so sombre, and his hat was so completely crushed down over his eyes, that they touched without recognizing him. But he, feeling himself jostled, raised his head and recognized them.

"*Par la mort Dieu!* I am glad to meet you, chevalier," said the elder brother, seizing the younger one's arm.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the latter with a wry face at the grip which the baron had given his arm.

"Yes, I was on my way to your house."

Dumesnil shook his head; he had a presentiment of

evil. But the chevalier quickly regained his joyous mood.

"Well, now, how strange!" he said; "I had this very moment remarked to Dumesnil that I must go to my brother's immediately and announce the happy news."

"The happy news?" echoed the baron, with a lugubrious smile. "Ah! you have happy news to communicate?"

"Yes."

"Indeed, the exchange will not be to your advantage, since I have, for my part, very disagreeable news to offer you."

It was easy enough for so keen an observer as Dumesnil to discover that the news which promised to be so disagreeable to the chevalier afforded the baron great satisfaction. Dumesnil shuddered; and as the chevalier's arm was linked with the captain's, he shuddered in sympathy, rather than from presentiment.

"Well, what is it, then?" murmured poor Dieudonné, turning pale, so terrified was he in advance by the flash of the bomb which the baron had shot athwart his happiness.

"Nothing at present."

"What! nothing at present?"

"No; I will tell you by and by, at my house, if you will go there with me."

Dumesnil perceived that the baron wished to speak privately to his brother, as the baron had not concealed the fact that his information was disagreeable to hear, Dumesnil preferred not to be present at the conversation. "Your pardon, Dieudonné," said he, "but I am just reminded that I am due at my colonel's." And he extended a hand to the chevalier, while he saluted the baron with the other.

But Dieudonné, menaced by unlooked-for misfortune,

was not the man to face it alone; he replaced within his own the arm that the captain had just withdrawn.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed; "you declared this very morning that you were free for the whole day. You will remain, my discreet friend, and my brother will speak before you. The deuce! you just now accepted half my joy, and the least you can do is to shoulder half my trouble."

"In fact," said the baron, "I do not know why I should leave the gentleman out of a confidence in which he is interested as well as you."

Captain Dumesnil lifted his head like a charger at the clarion's call, and his color heightened.

"The devil take the old Jack-in-the-box! He has spoiled our day," muttered he in Dieudonné's ear. Then aloud, in a tone divided between menace and entreaty: "The baron has undoubtedly reflected well on what he is about to communicate," said he; "yet I shall permit myself to observe that confidences sometimes prove as disastrous to those who tell them as they are painful to those who listen."

"Monsieur," dryly responded the baron, "I know my obligations as the head of the house de la Graverie, and I alone must judge as to what my honor demands."

"*Mon Dieu!* what does it all mean?" murmured the poor chevalier, shaking his head. "Dumesnil seems to understand what my brother has to say, yet he has not spoken of it to me. Come, my dear baron, unburden yourself at once; this perplexity is more disagreeable, I am very certain, than anything you have to say."

"Follow me, then, to my house," said the baron.

And, returning through the Champs-Élysées, the friends walked at his side, and by way of the Pont de la Concorde and the Rue de Bourgogne they reached the Rue de

Varennes and the baron's residence. All three were so preoccupied that no one broke the silence of that long walk.

Poor Dieudonné's anxiety was redoubled when he saw that his brother was taking them into his most secluded room, and carefully closing the door. When he had taken these preliminary precautions to insure the secrecy of their conference, the baron solemnly drew a letter from his pocket, presenting it to his brother with his right hand while with his left he clasped the latter's hand, and murmured with a profoundly sympathetic air, —

"Poor brother! poor brother! unhappy chevalier!"

This exordium was so lugubrious that Dieudonné hesitated to take the paper.

The momentary hesitation sufficed for Dumesnil to cast his eye upon it and to recognize the small, delicate writing. Before the chevalier had time to decide, the captain of the Grenadiers had seized the letter. "*Par le sang Dieu!*" said the captain, "he shall not read that letter, Monsieur le Baron." Then, recovering himself, he seized Monsieur de la Graverie, the elder, by a buttonhole and drew him into a corner of the room.

"I accept your reproaches, monsieur," he said; "I assume all the consequences of this affair. But I will not allow your poor brother's happiness to be crushed out of him. There are men who must dream in order to exist; think of it!" Then, still lower: "In the name of Heaven, monsieur, let the poor lamb live! He is made of the best clay to be found on earth."

"No, monsieur, no," answered the baron, elevating his voice; "the question of honor overrules all others in our family."

"Well! well!" said the captain, as if turning the thing into pleasantry, "you will admit that it is with honor

as with husband: safe if the matter is concealed, and scarcely hurt if it is known."

"But, monsieur, the culprit must be punished."

The captain seized the baron's wrist. "And who the devil asks grace?" said he, with blazing eyes; "do you not understand that I am at your service, monsieur?"

"No," continued the baron, raising his voice higher and higher; "Dieudonné must understand that his unworthy wife, and his not less unworthy friend—"

The captain became as pale as a corpse, and tried to stop the baron's mouth with his hand. He was too late; the chevalier had heard.

"My wife!" cried he. "Mathilde! she has deceived me, she? Never! it is impossible!"

"Well!" muttered the captain, "he has attained his end, the ruffian!"

And, shrugging his shoulders, he freed the baron and sat down in a corner of the room, like a man that has done what he could to avert a catastrophe, but who is patiently resigned upon its overtaking him in spite of his efforts.

"Impossible!" retorted the baron, paying no attention to the lamentable accent with which his brother had pronounced the word. "If you do not believe me, ask this gentleman to give you the letter of which he has taken possession in contempt of propriety and good-breeding, and you will have the proof of your dishonor."

Captain Dumesnil, seated in his corner, seemed impassive on the surface; but he bit his moustache like a man who is not so calm as he would seem.

Meanwhile Dieudonné became paler and paler; the few words that escaped from his lips explained that increasing pallor.

"My dishonor!" repeated he; "my dishonor! but then, brother, my child —"

The baron laughed aloud.

"The child," continued the chevalier, as if he had not heard his brother's derisive laughter, "the child that I have dreamed of when awake, thought of in my sleep, that I already saw in its little bed, with its little pink and white angelic form; the child whose sweet prattle already filled my ears, — that child does not belong to me? Oh, my God! my God!" continued he, in a voice broken with sobs, "I lose wife and child at a blow!"

The captain rose as if to go and take the chevalier in his arms; but he reseated himself immediately, and, instead of biting his moustache, he bit his lips.

But, as if blind to his brother's grief and the captain's rage, the baron brutally answered: —

"You do; for the letter, placed in my hands by accident, which I wished to convey to you, and of which Captain Dumesnil has possessed himself, contains your wife's felicitations to her lover upon her prospective maternity."

Poor Dieudonné made no reply: he had fallen upon his knees, concealing his face in his hands, while his form was shaken by convulsive sobs.

Captain Dumesnil could endure the scene no longer. He arose, and going directly to the baron, said in a low tone: —

"Monsieur, just now, as you very well know, having done everything to bring it about, I am not my own man; but when your brother has received the satisfaction that is justly his due, I shall be able to qualify your conduct as it deserves; and believe me, I shall not fail to do so."

As he finished speaking the officer bowed and turned towards the door.

"You are going, monsieur?" asked the baron.

"I confess," replied the captain, "my strength is not equal to this dreadful scene."

"Away with you, then; I have no objection! But return me Madame de la Graverie's letter."

"And why, pray, should I return it to you?" haughtily demanded the captain, with knitted brows.

"For the very simple reason that it is not addressed to you," replied the baron.

The captain leaned back against the wall; he had almost fallen. In fact, the captain, as the reader must have understood, had supposed up to this point that the baron's indictment assigned him a more active rôle in the affair than was the case. He quickly drew the letter from the pocket in which he had placed it, unfolded it, and glanced at the first lines.

From the gesture that escaped him, from the expression of his face, the baron divined everything.

"You, too!" cried he, rubbing his hands together. "You too! well, then, she is three times as bad as I thought her!"

"Yes, monsieur, I, too," said the captain, lowering his voice.

"Well?"

"Yes, I, too, am a wretch as base as she to have betrayed this tender, honorable, loyal heart; but tell him when he recovers —"

But Dieudonné, who had meanwhile emerged from his stupor, interrupted him.

"Dumesnil!" cried he, "Dumesnil, do not leave me, my friend; remember I have nothing in the world but your friendship to aid and comfort me now."

The captain, restrained by remorse, hesitated.

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried the poor chevalier, wringing his hands; "is friendship, then, merely a name, like love?"

The baron turned to advance towards his brother. That movement decided the captain. He seized the elder brother's arm with a grip that made the latter flinch with pain, and, glaring into his eyes, said in an imperious undertone, —

"Not a word more, monsieur! This is the first time that a fault of this kind has caused me a regret; but the remorse occasioned by this one is so keen that I doubt, I swear, whether my whole life will be enough to atone for it; yet I shall attempt it, monsieur, by devoting myself to your brother, and giving him the care and tenderness without which he cannot live. Be silent then, monsieur; it is not in your power, nor in mine, to annihilate the past, but torture that poor heart no longer."

"Anything will satisfy me, monsieur," sullenly replied the baron, "that will prevent my brother's running after a wife that has disgraced him, and will induce him to repudiate a child that would appropriate the fortune belonging to others."

"Oh, say belonging to you! that will be more frank; and then from a personal standpoint your conduct will, perhaps, be excusable," replied the captain, casting on the baron a look of contempt. "Be that as it may; but Madame de la Graverie's letter to Monsieur de Pontfarcy will quite suffice to obtain in the courts what you desire."

"Then return me the letter."

Dumesnil reflected a moment. Then, —

"I will do so, but on one condition."

"A condition?"

"You may take it, or leave it, monsieur," said the captain, with an impatient stamp of his foot; "so make haste. Your word, or I tear up the letter."

"But, monsieur!"

The captain made a gesture as if to tear the paper.

"Monsieur, on my honor as a gentleman —"

"A gentleman!" muttered Dumesnil, with an accent of sovereign contempt; "very well, yes, on your honor as a gentleman — since you are yet a gentleman, it appears, though engaged in such a business — swear that you will never tell your brother that he has been deceived at the same time by the two men he has called his friends; swear, in short, that you will never interfere with the expiation to which I wish to devote the rest of my life."

"I swear it, monsieur," said the baron, devouring the precious letter with his eyes.

"That is well. And I rely so implicitly on your keeping your oath, that I will not say what I shall do if you break it."

And the captain gave the baron Mathilde's letter to Monsieur de Pontfarcy. Then, approaching the chevalier, still crouching in grief, he said, —

"Come, Dieudonné, get up and lean on me; we are men."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" said the chevalier, rising with effort, and throwing himself into the captain's arms; "you will not leave me, will you?"

"No, no," murmured the captain, caressing his friend as he might have caressed a child.

"Oh, don't you see," continued the chevalier, in a voice broken by sobs, "I am afraid I shall go mad, I am so terrified by the future that opens before me, so sure that comparison of the past with the present will render life unbearable."

"Come," said the baron, "have courage! The best of women is not worth half the tears you have shed in the last quarter of an hour, — still less an unfaithful one."

"Oh, you don't know, you don't know," interrupted poor Dieudonné, "what that woman was to me! You have ambition to occupy you; you pursue honors; pleasures and the gossip of the two chambers have place in your heart; you are concerned about the promotions, the distinctions, that your rivals obtain. As for me, I had only her; she was my whole life, my whole joy, my whole ambition on earth. The words that fell from her lips were the only ones that had any value for me; and now that I feel everything suddenly fallen from under my feet, it seems as if I were about to enter a desert without water, without sun, and without light, where the time will no longer be marked save by my grief! Oh, my God! my God!"

"Bah!" exclaimed the baron, "stuff and nonsense!"

"Monsieur!" warned the captain, almost threateningly.

"Oh, you cannot prevent my telling my brother," returned the baron, not losing sight of his inheritance, — "you cannot prevent my telling him that he owes it to the name he bears not to let it be disgraced; in ceasing to esteem a woman unworthy of you, you cease to love her."

"That is all sophistry, all wrong, brother!" cried the chevalier, with despair in his heart; "at this very moment, look you, — at this very moment when her fault breaks my heart, when shame reddens my face, — yes, even now, I love her, I love her!"

"Friend," murmured the captain, "you must be a man, you must live."

"Live! for what, now? Ah, yes! to avenge myself, to kill her lover! Yes, according to society's code, he

or I must die, because God has made a woman base and treacherous; and because, base and treacherous, she has forfeited her honor, a man's death is necessary; and all for society, for honor, — as if society cared how my peace was destroyed; as if honor cared for my happiness or my unhappiness! But the world and honor care for one thing, forsooth; and that is blood. Little it matters whose is shed for the offence."

"Are you afraid, brother?" demanded the baron.

The chevalier regarded his brother with a hopeless expression. "I am afraid only of being the one who kills," said he.

And he pronounced these words with an animation and an energy that proved how truly he had spoken. Then, with an effort, and placing his hand on the captain's shoulder, he said: —

"Come, my poor Dumesnil, help me to my revenge, since I cannot leave my vengeance to God without being charged with cowardice." And, turning to his brother, he continued: "Baron, I pledge you my honor that to-morrow, at this hour, either Monsieur de Pontfarcy or I shall be dead. Is this all you exact as the representative of the family honor?"

"No; for I know your weakness, brother. I demand a power of attorney to secure you a legal separation from your unworthy wife."

"And the document, — you have it, doubtless, brother, all prepared, all drawn up?"

"It wants only your signature."

"I thought as much. Give me a pen, ink, and the document."

"Here is what you ask, my dear Dieudonné," said the baron, presenting the paper to his brother with one hand, and with the other a pen dipped in ink.

The chevalier signed his name without uttering a word, without drawing a sigh. But the signature was so wavering as to be scarcely legible.

"*Mille tonnerres!*" ejaculated the captain, hurrying his friend away and casting a last look at the baron; "men have been hanged, and a goodly number, who have not so richly deserved it as that man!"

IX.

A BROKEN HEART.

At the street door there was almost a struggle between the chevalier and his friend. The chevalier wished to turn to the left, the captain tried to lead him to the right.

Dieudonné insisted on returning to his home, to reproach Mathilde with her treachery and bid her a last adieu. The captain, on the contrary, in his friend's interest, as well as in his own, had excellent reasons for preventing the interview. He accordingly employed all his eloquence to induce Dieudonné to relinquish his project; but it was with great difficulty that he prevailed on the chevalier to go with him to his own modest lodgings, instead of returning home.

When his friend was once installed in the little room, Dumesnil divested himself of his uniform, put on a suit of black, and prepared to go out. The poor chevalier was so overcome with grief that he did not perceive his friend's intention until the door was opened. He stretched out his arms as a child might have done.

"Dumesnil," cried he, "are you going to leave me alone?"

"My poor friend," said the captain, "have you already forgotten that you have to call a man to account, I will not say for your honor, but for his own?"

"Oh, I had forgotten it, I confess. Dumesnil! Dumesnil! I think only of Mathilde."

And again the chevalier burst into tears.

"Weep, weep, my friend," said the captain; "the blessed God, who doeth all things well, has supplied the hearts of good and feeble creatures with escape-valves through which to pour out a grief that would otherwise kill them. Weep! Oh, I shall not bid you keep back your tears."

"Well, go, my friend, go; I thank you for recalling me to my duty."

"I am off."

"I have one request."

"What is it?"

"Try to hasten matters; if possible, have the meeting take place to-morrow morning."

"Rest easy, my friend," said the captain, clasping the chevalier to his heart; "I shall be very sorry if all is not ended this evening."

And the chevalier was alone.

Here let us pause to ask, very humbly, the reader's pardon. We said, in the beginning, that this was to be unlike other stories. Here is the proof.

All heroes of romance are handsome, tall, straight, well-formed, brave, intellectual, shrewd. They have beautiful hair, black or blond, large eyes, black or blue. They are endowed with a sensitiveness that sends the hand to the sword-hilt or pistol-butt at the least offence. In short, they are quick to respond, whether hatred challenges hatred, or love, love.

Our hero possesses none of these characteristics: he is ugly rather than handsome, short rather than tall, fat rather than slender, more cowardly than brave, more naïve than shrewd. His hair is neither black nor blond; it is yellowish. His eyes are neither black nor blue; they are green. The offence committed against him has

been great, and yet, as already shown, he will fight only because society demands it. Finally, he is irresolute, and, instead of hating, he still loves her who has deceived him.

It has for a long time appeared to us that humble natures have been disinherited of the right to love and suffer. It has seemed to us that it was not absolutely necessary to be as handsome as Adonis and as brave as Roland to have the right to the supreme passions of love and grief. And while searching the imagination for a character to endow with life, we chanced to encounter in the very heart of society exactly the man we sought. It was the poor Chevalier de la Graverie. He exemplified our theory, that, without being the typical hero either physically or morally, one can suffer all the human griefs expressed in these few words: he loved; he was deceived.

And so, on being left alone, instead of posing as an Antony or a Werther, Dieudonné abandoned himself very simply, and naturally, to his despair. He walked the floor, lengthwise, crosswise, and diagonally, calling Mathilde, not ungrateful, perfidious, cruel, but by the sweetest and most endearing of the names he had been accustomed to give her; he reproached her as if she were able to hear him. In order to share her blame, he cast about for grounds of complaint against himself that might justify her treason. He dried his tears only to have to dry them a moment later.

Ah, well, we confess it, here is a grief that has all our sympathy. The weakness of a man who displays the helplessness of an infant is heart-rending, in that, finding no consolation in itself, it does not seek it from others; its relief all depends on God. Not that such weakness has the faith that says: "The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

but that it cries: "What have I done that I should suffer so? My God! my God! have pity on me!"

Now, do you know what desire controlled this unhappy one, so cruelly betrayed by his wife? It was to see Mathilde once more, just once more. He would utter the reproaches that were stifling him. He would — Who knows? — she might be able to vindicate herself!

After a thousand doubts, a thousand misgivings, he seemed suddenly to reach a decision, and hastened to the door. But he found that his friend had locked it. He ran to the window and began to curse Dumesnil. It was a relief to have anything to curse that was not Mathilde.

Suddenly it occurred to him that the concierge would come if he called from the window, and, having, doubtless, a duplicate key to the room, she would open it for him. He raised the window and called. The court remained deserted.

In the same ratio as difficulties multiplied in the way of the chevalier and his desire to see Mathilde, his desire increased.

"Yes, yes, yes!" he cried aloud, "I must see her again, and I will!"

Then he shouted, "Mathilde! Mathilde! Dear Mathilde!" And he sank, writhing, to the floor.

Suddenly he arose and looked searchingly around. His eyes stopped at the bed: there was what he sought. He rushed at it like a tiger at his prey; he snatched off the clothes, tore them into strips, and began to knot the strips together.

The man who, when ten years old, had called his aunt to lead him down a flight of stairs, who was seized with dizziness on mounting a horse, — this man, without any debate with himself, had resolved to descend from a window on the third floor by means of these torn strips.

So, his task finished, he went toward the window, to reach which he must pass the door. There he stopped, essayed again to open it, but in vain. He pushed against it with all his strength; but the door was firm and resisted his efforts. "Come!" said he, "we will see!" and then he tied one end of his rope to the window bar.

Night had come, or the twilight, at least. He looked over, and recoiled; the height of the casement made his head swim. "I was dizzy because I looked," he said; "If I don't look, I shall not be dizzy."

He closed his eyes, bestrode the window-ledge, clutched the knotted rope with both hands, and began to descend.

At the top of the first story, that is, when midway, the chevalier heard a rending of cloth above his head; then, suddenly, his support gave way, and he fell with his whole weight from a height of fifteen feet. His rope had broken; either a knot had been badly tied, or the cloth, old, and torn in narrow strips, had not been strong enough to sustain a man's weight.

The chevalier's first feeling was of joy at finding himself on the ground. He had experienced only a violent shock of the whole body, but no local pain. He attempted to rise, but fell back. His left leg was broken three inches above the ankle. Nevertheless, he tried to walk; but he then felt such excruciating pain that he uttered a cry, although he had not cried out when falling. Then everything seemed to whirl about him; he sought the wall to lean against, but the wall whirled with everything else. He realized that he was losing his senses, once more pronounced the name of Mathilde, the last ray of reason, or, rather, of love, and fainted.

At that name it seemed to him that a woman answered, advancing towards him, and that the woman was Mathilde. But his mind was already enshrouded in so

dense a cloud as to be unable to distinguish any object with certainty; the chevalier extended his arms towards the dear image, without knowing whether it was a dream or a reality.

The woman was, in truth, Mathilde, who, quite ignorant of the day's events, and finding that Dieudonné did not return, had waited until the twilight, and, tying a veil over her hat, had at first gone to Monsieur de Pontfarcy's. Monsieur de Pontfarcy was absent. She then hastened to Monsieur Dumesnil's. She had traversed the court to gain the second staircase, which led to the captain's modest apartments, when she heard a cry, and then saw a man who staggered as if intoxicated, and who, finally, had fallen, invoking the name of Mathilde. Not till then had she recognized her husband. She threw herself down on her knees at his side, taking his hands in her own, crying, "Dieudonné! dear Dieudonné!"

At that voice, which could have made him tremble in his tomb, Dieudonné opened his eyes, and an expression of unspeakable joy and happiness was depicted on his countenance. He endeavored to speak, but his voice failed, his eyes closed again, and Mathilde heard only a prolonged and painful sigh.

At this juncture a third person came upon the scene. It was Captain Dumesnil. He saw Dieudonné in a swoon, Mathilde weeping, and a fragment of cloth hanging from the window. He comprehended all.

"Ah, madame," said he, "your presence alone was lacking to bring about his death also."

"How! His also?" demanded Mathilde. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that there will be two of them."

And the captain threw a pair of swords down upon the pavement of the court where they rebounded, with a

clang. He then took Dieudonné in his arms as if he had been a child, and bore him up to his apartment. Mathilde followed, sobbing.

In a swoon though he was, Dieudonné had a vague consciousness of the passing scene. He seemed to recognize the captain's room; he was lying on the bed that he had robbed of its covering. He heard Dumesnil's voice, stern and emphatic, rumbling in his ears; Mathilde's, sweet and deprecating, alternated with it. She called the captain "Charles"!

Then it seemed to the wounded man that, in his delirium, he was witnessing a strange scene passing between his friend and his wife, during which he heard, or thought he heard, rather, that the captain too had betrayed him. The captain cursed her who had caused him to commit what he now regarded as a crime, and declared that he was about to consecrate himself, body and soul, to his victim, as some expiation of his fault. As for Mathilde, she was on her knees by his bedside; she held him, clasped him, kissed his hands; asked forgiveness sometimes from him, sometimes from Dumesnil, also confessing her guilt, and vowing to expiate it, for her part, by a life of austerity and penitence. Then the murmur of voices was extinguished by the dull rumbling sound in his ears caused by the blood's surging, a stormy flood, back to his heart, and the Chevalier de la Graverie completely lost consciousness.

When he came to himself he found his leg bound in splints. He was in the captain's room, and, by the glow of a lighted lamp on the table near the bed, he saw the captain seated at the foot.

"And Mathilde," he asked, after gazing all about the room, "where is she?"

At this question the captain started violently in his

chair. "Mathilde! Mathilde!" stammered he, "why do you ask for Mathilde?"

"Where has she gone? She was here just now."

If Dieudonné had at that moment scanned his friend's honest face, he would have thought him about to faint in his turn, so pale had he grown.

"My friend," said Dumesnil, "you are delirious; your wife has never been here."

Dieudonné, his eyes blazing with fever, stared at Dumesnil. "But, I tell you, she was here just now, on her knees, kissing my hands and weeping."

The captain maintained his lie. "You are mad!" said he; "Madame de la Graverie is certainly at home, ignorant of what has happened, and, consequently, she has had no reason to come here."

With a heavy groan, the chevalier fell back on his pillow. "And yet I could have sworn that she was here but a little while ago, accusing herself and weeping; that she called you — called you — "

A thought like a flash crossed the unhappy man's brain. He raised himself almost threateningly.

"What is your name?" he demanded of his friend.

"Why, you know it very well, unless your delirium has returned," answered Dumesnil.

"But your first name?"

The captain understood. "Louis," said he; "don't you remember it?"

"True," responded Dieudonné.

In fact, it was the only Christian name by which he had known the captain, who was also named Charles Dumesnil.

On reflecting that, in her anxiety as to his absence, his wife would at least have endeavored to learn the cause, the chevalier muttered sadly to himself, "But if

she is not here, where is she?" And then he added, in a tone so low that Dumesnil could scarcely hear, "At Monsieur de Pontfarcy's, undoubtedly."

And at that idea his wrath rose again. "Ah," said he, "you know, Dumesnil, that I must either kill him, or he must kill me."

"He will not kill you, and still less will you kill him," responded the captain, in a hollow tone.

"And why not?"

"Because he is dead."

"Dead! and how?"

"From a thrust given *en quarte* and received full in the breast."

"And who killed him?"

"I did."

"You, Dumesnil! and by what right?"

"By my right to prevent your going to certain death, my poor fellow. Your brother will wear mourning, perhaps, because you are still alive, but so much the worse for him!"

"And you fought, you wretch! telling him that you fought for my sake, and because Mathilde had betrayed me!"

"Oh, be tranquil, now; I engaged Monsieur de Pontfarcy in duel because he drank his absinthe pure, and I cannot endure people who have that dreadful habit."

The chevalier threw his arms about the captain's neck, and embraced him impulsively, murmuring, "Of course, I must have been dreaming!"

But the captain, whom this exclamation occasioned new remorse, gently freed himself from the embrace, and went silently and sat down in a corner of the apartment.

"Oh, Mathilde! Mathilde!" murmured the chevalier.

X.

IN WHICH IT IS SEEN THAT TRAVEL SHAPES THE CHARACTER OF YOUTH.

It was decided that the chevalier should remain, during his convalescence, with Captain Dumesnil. It is true, the captain had consulted only himself in arriving at this decision. He left the wounded man on the bed, and betook himself to the sofa. For a man who had made nearly all the campaigns of the Empire, it was not a very fatiguing bivouac.

The chevalier did not sleep; all night he tossed about on the bed, stifling his sobs, but emitting audible sighs of despair.

The next day Dumesnil sought to distract his mind: he talked of amusements, studies, new affections; but the chevalier responded only with Mathilde and his grief.

Dumesnil wisely judged that time only could assuage Dieudonné's grief, and that to render it supportable even, the unhappy man must be taken out of the country as soon as his condition would permit.

For the sake of the task to which he had vowed to devote his life, the captain, who had reached the age of retirement before this, took the steps necessary for quitting the service and securing his pension. Hence, six weeks after the accident, and when his friend had begun to walk, the fracture having been a simple one, and the convalescence unimpeded, Dumesnil begged the chevalier to accompany him to Havre, where, he said, he had business.

Arrived there, as this was Dieudonné's first view of the sea, Dumesnil insisted on his visiting a packet ship. The chevalier followed unresistingly; but, once on board, Dumesnil declared that he had paid their passage on the vessel, and that they would leave for America the next day, at six o'clock in the morning. The chevalier listened with surprise, but made no objection to the plan.

At Paris, one day, when his friend had left him alone, intentionally perhaps, the chevalier had returned secretly to the Rue de l'Université, of a certainty to see Mathilde again, and, perhaps, to pardon her. He had learned from the concierge that, on the next day after he himself had failed to return, Madame de la Graverie had gone away, and no one knew what had become of her. All the efforts made by Monsieur de la Graverie to learn the place of her retreat had ended in the conviction that she had left France.

It was, then, only after the poor chevalier had become convinced that he could not exercise towards his wife the clemency of which he was ready to give her proof, that he had consented to follow his friend to Havre. Besides, if Mathilde had left France, perhaps she had gone by way of Havre; and at Havre, perhaps, by a happy chance, he might obtain news of her.

Yet, it must be said, the chevalier had somewhat lost his confidence in destiny, and counted but little on chance, especially on a happy chance. As to leaving France, he raised no objections, — Mathilde was no longer in France. And so he established himself in his cabin, without even asking to go ashore again.

The next day, with American punctuality, the packet weighed anchor and was off.

During the whole passage, the poor chevalier was seasick, with the result that, instead of thinking of Mathilde,

he no longer thought of anything, which so pleased the captain that he was ready to say, like the prisoner tired of his cell, to whom the hour of torture was announced, —

"Good! that will at least help to while away the time."

They arrived at New York. The activity of the great commercial city, excursions into the suburbs, trips up the Hudson, and a visit to Niagara Falls caused several months to pass endurably. But in the midst of all this he experienced terrible shocks.

From time to time the chevalier would see a woman whose face resembled Mathilde's. Thereupon, dropping his friend's arm, he would dart off like an arrow, and follow the lady until convinced of his error. His mistake recognized, all strength would abandon him, and, wherever he might be, he would sink down, whether upon a bench, or a curb, or even upon the ground, and there remain until his friend came and found him. For this reason, the captain resolved to abandon civilization and take him beyond the reach of such experiences.

They followed the line of the Great Lakes to the Chicago River, crossed to the Mississippi, descended it to St. Louis, went up the Missouri as far as Fort Mandan, and there joined a band of hunters and trappers bound for the Pacific by way of the Yellowstone River and the Rocky Mountains. They descended the Colorado to the Gulf of California. This gave the chevalier a chance to see strange regions, and, above all, women whom he could not, from either face or figure, mistake for Madame de la Graverie.

At that period California still belonged to Mexico, and, consequently, was yet a desert. The captain and his friend at last reached the military post which is to-day the theatre of San Francisco, and which at that time was mirrored almost in solitude in the waters of its bay.

The chevalier had made all that long journey, sometimes in a boat, sometimes on a mule, sometimes on horseback. His old timidity had disappeared, and, without having become a cavalier of the first rank, he had attained to something like a mastery of the different mounts he had essayed. Moreover, his friend, profiting by the rage into which he was thrown by the incessant chattering of the birds which they encountered in flocks, and which disturbed his meditations, had placed a gun in his hands, and by degrees had familiarized him with the use of the weapon. The chevalier had not become an accomplished marksman, but in the end, at thirty paces, with a perched bird, he was almost sure of his game.

To vary the amusement, the captain often substituted a pistol for a gun, and ball for shot. Monsieur de la Graverie began by missing the first hundred birds that he aimed at; then he hit one, and missed fifty others; then he again killed one, and missed only twenty-five; then twelve, then six. At last, he could drop three out of five. His skill with the pistol never surpassed that limit; but the captain, who brought down his bird at every shot, considered the progress made by his friend to be something wonderful, and expressed great satisfaction.

Then, under the pretext that Monsieur de la Graverie was exhibiting a tendency towards corpulence, he was induced to try fencing. For this drill, which forced the chevalier to emerge from his usual apathy, the captain was obliged to exercise authority; but the chevalier was accustomed to obey like a child, and, from third rate with the gun, and fourth rate with the pistol, he became, unsuspectingly, sixth or seventh rate at fencing.

All this was not so appalling as real combat; but, in truth, given the occasion, the chevalier could have

defended himself, — a thing of which he had previously been incapable. But the captain cherished another scheme, whose audacity took a different direction. He had resolved to take advantage of the first vessel leaving for Tahiti, and pass a year with his friend in that paradise of the Pacific Ocean, that gem of Polynesia. The opportunity presented itself. The chevalier went abroad without inquiring for what part of the world they were setting sail. In due season they disembarked at Papaete.

Up to that time, the captain had not known the chevalier to pay the least attention to scenery. The Niagara Falls had indeed scarcely forced a moment's attention; the sole mark of astonishment that he had given had been to stop his ears and say, —

"Let us go; it is deafening."

He had descended the Mississippi and seen the triple-decked monsters passing by, resembling districts of a floating city; yet he had not raised his eyes to their summits. He had traversed virgin forests, and, lost in their midst, had not been troubled as to how he should find his way. He had strayed over the limitless prairies, and had not once questioned the horizon to learn if they were coming to the end. But, arriving at Papaete, he was impelled to exclaim: "Well! here is a country that suits me! What is its name, Dumesnil?"

"It has many names," answered the captain. "Quiros, who first visited it, called it Sagittaria; Bougainville, true Frenchman of the eighteenth century, called it La Nouvelle Cythère; Cook, Otaheiti. You see that you have a choice of names."

The chevalier asked no more questions; this was much.

After having made a safe passage of the channel hemmed in by reefs, — thanks to the native pilot who

had come aboard, — anchor was cast in a roadstead as calm as a lake. A crowd of Kanaka boats thronged about, looking for passengers; these boats, like those of New Zealand, the Isle of Pines, and the Sandwich Islands, were made each from the trunk of a single tree. The chevalier, jumping into one, almost capsized it.

"Well!" said he, without being otherwise disturbed, "a little more, and I should have been drowned."

"What! don't you know how to swim?" asked Dumesnil.

"No," replied the chevalier, simply; "but you will teach me, will you not, Dumesnil?"

Dumesnil had instructed the chevalier in so many things that he did not at all suppose that the captain would refuse to teach him to swim, just as he had taught him to fence, ride, and shoot.

"No," answered Dumesnil, "I shall not teach you to swim."

"Oh!" exclaimed Dieudonné, in astonishment, "and why not?"

"Because women are the swimming-masters here."

The chevalier blushed. He considered the pleasantry to be in rather bad taste.

"Look, then," bade Dumesnil.

And as they were nearing the shore, and also as it was five o'clock in the afternoon, he pointed out a bevy of women sporting in the waters.

The chevalier looked in the direction indicated by the captain, where he beheld a spectacle by which he was captivated in spite of himself.

A dozen women, naked as the Nereids of antiquity, were swimming about in that blue sea, so clear that one can see, thirty or forty feet beneath the water, the marvellous submarine growth, which gradually forms

the coral banks encircling the island. Picture to yourself gigantic madrepores shaped like huge sponges, every orifice being a dark and yawning abyss swarming with fish of all sizes and forms, and of every color, blue, red, yellow, and gold. Then, in the midst of all this, fearless of the depths, the rocks, or the sharks which are occasionally darting about, swift as arrows of burning steel, are women, nymphs knowing not even the name of shame, the language of the country having no word to express that wholly Christian virtue, — women, wearing no robe other than their own long hair; diving beneath the water that seems but a denser atmosphere, so limpid it is; rolling over and over, and frolicking about in such fashion that one feels the sea to be their second element, and that they scarcely need rise to the surface of the water to breathe.

The poor chevalier was in the dazed state of an intoxicated man. The captain was obliged to support his steps when they had gained the land, and he went and sat down with him under a pandanus-tree in bloom.

"Well, what do you think of the country, my dear Dieudonné?" asked Dumesnil.

"It is paradise," responded the chevalier. Then with a sigh, he added: "Oh, if Mathilde were here!" And his eyes were lost in the depths of the horizon with an expression of melancholy one would have supposed to be wholly foreign to that roly-poly figure.

The captain left him to his reflections under the pandanus, while he sought information from the natives; however sweet the air and caressing the breeze in the bay of Papaete, the captain did not intend to sleep under the open sky. At length he returned to Dieudonné.

It was six o'clock, that is to say, nightfall; the sun, like a red disk, was descending rapidly into the sea. At

[illegible] the sky has just become [illegible] and the light [illegible] at whatever time of year it may be, the sun rises at six in the morning and sets at six in the evening. One has only to be tolerably intelligent to know two periods of the day with as much accuracy as did the Parisians formerly by that of the Palais Royal.

The captain touched Dieudonné's shoulder, lightly.

"Well?" demanded the chevalier.

"Well, I am here," said the captain.

"What do you wish?"

"Why, I wish to ask what you intend to do?"

The chevalier stared at his captain in amazement.

"What I intend to do?"

"Certainly."

"Good God!" cried he, almost frightened, "must I do anything?"

"In the matter of lodgings, you [illegible] to what I have already done?"

"As long as you like."

"Do you wish to live like a European or like a native?"

"It does not matter which."

"To lodge in a house, or in a hut?"

"As you like."

"So be it: as I like. But you must not complain afterwards."

"Do I ever complain?" asked Dieudonné.

"You! poor lamb of the Lord!" murmured the captain to himself. Then, to the chevalier: "Very well, stay here ten minutes longer and watch the sunset, while I go and make arrangements about lodgings."

Dieudonné nodded assent: he was at all times sad, but he [illegible] of a cruel [illegible] that he had not before experienced.

The sun having disappeared in the sea, night came with almost magic swiftness. But what a night! It was not darkness, but absence of day. An atmosphere transparent as our most beautiful twilight; a sea in which every fish left a wake of fire; a sky where every star seemed to unfold like a rose or a yellow corn-flower.

The captain returned to get Dieudonné.

"Oh," pleaded the latter, "let me stay and look at all these beautiful things a little longer!"

"Ah," said the joyful captain, "then you can see, at last!"

"Yes; it seems to me that I am only this evening beginning to live."

"Yet come with me, and you shall see it all from your room."

"From the window?"

"No, through the walls. Come!"

It was the first time that Dieudonné had not yielded to the first invitation. Together they took their way toward the house.

Hereupon there was yet other evidence of improvement in the chevalier's condition, for, although he had entered many houses since leaving the captain's apartments without paying the slightest attention to them, he observed this one.

That it was noticeable is true. At first sight it seemed to be, not a human habitation, but a bird-cage. It was almost square, rounded at the extremities, a little longer than it was broad, and covered with pandanus-leaves overlapping like tiles. It might have been taken for a large arbor, such as we build against the walls of our gardens for ivies and twining vines. The roof was supported by posts. It was made with joists overlaid by mats having red and black designs; a mass of seaweed

and a large piece of white canvas had been thrown down in one corner. They constituted the bed and bed-clothes. In the middle of the room a small table was drawn up, laden with fruit, milk, and bread. A sort of calabash, filled with cocoanut oil in which wicks were burning, provided the lamp. Through the open sides were visible sky and sea, and, as if floating in these two infinite realms, an infinitude of golden stars.

"Well," said Dumesnil to Dieudonné, "you see there is nothing to interfere with your looking out."

"Yes, my friend; but —"

"But what?"

"If nothing interferes with my looking out, neither does anything interfere with others' looking in."

"Do you intend to do anything wicked?" demanded Dumesnil.

"God forbid!" was the chevalier's response.

"Well, then, are you afraid of anything?" asked Dumesnil.

"Now that you speak of it, what is there to be afraid of?" rejoined the chevalier.

"Absolutely nothing."

"No serpents, no reptiles, no rats?"

"There 's not a harmful animal in the whole island!"

"Ah!" murmured the chevalier, "Mathilde! Mathilde!"

"Again!" said Dumesnil.

"No, my friend, no!" cried the chevalier; "but if she were here —"

"Well?"

"I would never return to France."

The captain looked at the chevalier, and sighed in turn. But, whatever the resemblance between one sigh and another, the chevalier's did not resemble the captain's. The first was a sigh of grief; the second, of remorse.

XI.

MAHOUNI.

The chevalier sat down to the table, ate a guava, two or three bananas, and a fruit as red as a strawberry and as large as a pippin, whose name he did not know. Then, in place of bread, he broke manioc-root into a cup of cocoanut milk; after which, on being questioned by his friend, — the chevalier spoke only when addressed, — he declared that he had never dined so well in his life.

After supper, it was with great difficulty that the captain induced him to remove his clothing to go to bed. The open walls gave the alarm to his modesty. Before he would yield, Dumesnil was obliged to assure him that everybody was in bed, in Papaete, by ten o'clock. But, although the captain affirmed that, in this Polynesian Eden, people lay naked, finding supreme enjoyment in exposing the flesh to the velvety night-breeze, he would not leave off his nether garments.

When the captain had seen him in bed, according to his custom for three years, he withdrew to his own quarters, a second apartment in the hut. There were two other rooms, which were occupied by the Tahitian family from whom the captain had rented his, and who had instantly vacated these according to agreement. The chevalier was ignorant of this detail; he never asked questions concerning anything, and the partition separating him from his hosts being quite close, he had not even

thought of inquiring as to what was on the other side of it.

What attracted the chevalier's eye, when anything attracted it, was the grand spectacle of Nature, which seemed made to serve as a setting for profound sentiment. And yet, as we have seen, only a few hours had elapsed since poor Dieudonné had remembered that he possessed eyes. He lay down, then, and, although his mind wandered over scenes of the past, his eyes looked out through the openings of the hut upon that beautiful sky, that azure sea.

A few steps from the hut a bird sang, invisible in the shrubbery; it was the bulbul of Oceanica, the love bird, the marvellous *touï*, which wakes only when all else sleeps, which sings only when all else is silent. The chevalier, leaning on his elbow, his face close to one of the openings in the hut, looked and listened, overwhelmed by an indefinable atmosphere of melancholy and yet of well-being; one would have said that the calm of that night, the clearness of the sky, the harmony of song, had materialized and dissolved into an air-bath, designed by the supreme Providence to refresh the wearied frame and expand the suffering heart. It seemed to the chevalier that he was breathing freely for the first time in three years.

Suddenly he thought he heard the light step of a child brushing the herbage, and, in the transparent half-light, appeared the charming figure of a young girl of fourteen or fifteen years, having for her only garment her long hair, and for sole ornament two magnificent blossoms of a species of lotus, white and red, that floats on the streams, and of which the young Tahitian girls make their favorite ornaments, putting them through the cartilage of the ears. The young girl lazily dragged a mat

behind her. Under an orange-tree, ten paces distant from the hut, opposite the bush where the *touï* sang, she spread her mat and dropped down upon it.

The chevalier knew not whether he was waking or dreaming, whether he should keep his eyes open or should shut them.

Never had statue more perfect left the sculptor's hands; but, instead of being a pale Carrara or Parian marble, she seemed a Florentine bronze. For a little while she amused herself listening to the *touï's* song, occasionally jarring with her shoulder the orange-tree against which she leaned, and bringing down upon herself a shower of fragrant snowy bloom. Then, with no cover other than the long hair with which she was, for that matter, almost completely veiled, she sank down by degrees, and slept, her head under her arm, like a bird's under its wing.

The chevalier was much longer in going to sleep, and he succeeded at last only by turning away from the wall, and opposing the name of Mathilde as a buckler against what he had seen.

The next morning, the captain, entering his friend's room, found him not only awake, but up, although it was hardly six o'clock. The chevalier complained of having slept badly. Dumesnil proposed that he should refresh himself by a walk, to which the chevalier agreed.

Just as they were about to start, the door of the partition opened, and a young girl appeared. She came to ask if they needed anything. Dieudonné recognized the beautiful sleeper of the night before, and blushed to his ears. However, she wore her day costume. We know what her night costume had been. Her dress was a long, white gown, quite scant, opening in front, and not fastened at the throat; a piece of dark-blue foulard,

with red and yellow flowers, was wound around her hips over the gown. Arms, feet, and legs were bare.

Still blushing, the chevalier studied her more closely than he had dared to do the night before.

She was, as we have said, a girl of fourteen; yet in Tahiti a girl of fourteen is a woman. Like all Tahitian women, she was small of stature, but admirably formed; her skin was tinted a most beautiful copper-color; she had long hair, as already said, but silky and black as a raven's wing; her eyes were very full and velvety, and shaded by long black lashes; her nostrils were wide and dilating, like those of an Indian accustomed to scenting danger, pleasure, and love; the cheek-bones were salient; the nose was a little flattened; the lips were full and sensual, the teeth white as pearls, the hands small, slender, and delicate, and her form was as flexible as a reed.

The captain thanked the young Tahitienne, informed his friend that she was the daughter of their hostess, and announced that they would not return until nine o'clock.

The child seemed to understand very well what was said, and the captain, having spoken to her, seemed to wait for his friend to do the same. But Dieudonné gave no heed; he turned aside to avoid touching the girl's silk scarf, and passed her with a bow that he might have bestowed upon a Parisienne on the boulevard des Capucines. After which he quickly bore away his friend. It was evident that the young girl inspired him with a species of terror.

The captain was not surprised; he knew the chevalier's shyness with respect to women, but he had not expected his friend to treat a Tahitienne exactly as if she were a lady. So, indicating the young girl, who, with downcast look, was watching their departure, he demanded:

"Why did you not speak to Mahouni? She is hurt."

"Is her name Mahouni?" inquired the chevalier.

"Yes, a pretty name, is it not?"

Dieudonné made no reply.

"Do you object to that young girl? Let us change our hut," said the captain.

"No! no!" quickly responded Dieudonné.

And they continued their way. Dumesnil, like another Tarquin, struck off the heads of the plants which were too high, while his bamboo whistled through the air. Dieudonné followed him in silence. It is true that silence was so habitual with the chevalier that if the captain remarked it, he was in no wise disturbed by it.

That first walk sufficed to reveal to the friends that they had reached a country marvellous as to vegetation, at least.

The town presented an aspect which was at once primitive and charming. Capital, as it had the honor to be, it was in appearance an immense village rather than a city, each house having its own garden under the trees, in whose shade it seemed swallowed up. Then, as they neared the outskirts, foot-paths began to take the place of streets, and there came a succession of bowers, of trees most beautiful in form, of choicest flowers and most abundant fruits; there were walks gravelled with fine sand and arched over with plantain, cocoanut-palms, guava-trees, paw-paws, orange and citron trees, and the pandanus; above all these rose the iron-tree, with its red wood, and its branches resembling giant asparagus gone to seed. Then, too, a perfumed air, birds of a thousand hues, and the charming echoes of women's voices and of birds' circulating through the trees, made this island of flowers and fragrance seem a fairy realm.

At the end of an hour's sauntering through the winding walks of a sort of English park, the captain stopped;

a chattering, for which he could not account, was heard close by. He left the path, went about fifty paces through the trees, parted the leaves as he might have lifted a curtain, and stood motionless, mute, surprised.

Dieudonné followed him with his eyes; when he was with the captain, he obeyed him as the body obeys the mind, he followed him as the shadow follows the body.

The captain, without speaking, made a sign for Dieudonné to approach.

Dieudonné advanced mechanically, and looked absently. But his abstraction did not endure long; the scene before his eyes must have won attention from Destouches' Absent-minded Man himself.

The shrubbery through which they were gazing bordered the river. In the water, forming a circle, as in a salon, were seated or reclining some thirty women, entirely naked. As the river had less than two feet of depth, those who were seated had but the lower part of the body covered by water, so limpid as to be no veil, while the others, who were reclining, had only the head above water. All had flowing hair; all inhaled voluptuously the morning air while fashioning wreaths, ear-sprays, and necklaces of flowers. Water-lilies, China roses, and gardenias contributed chiefly toward the decorations. As if these wonderful creatures comprehend that they are themselves but human blossoms, their great passion is for flowers, their inanimate sisters; born amidst flowers, they live with them, and are buried beneath them.

While putting the wreaths on their heads, twining necklaces about their necks, and slipping the sprays into their ears, they chattered and prattled and babbled, like a flock of fresh-water birds settled down on a lake, twittering and cackling in rivalry of one another.

"There she is!" ejaculated the chevalier, pointing with his finger.

"Who?" asked the captain.

The chevalier blushed; he had recognized the sleeping beauty of the night before, the charming young hostess of the morning. He forgot that he had said nothing to the captain of the vision he had seen, and pointed toward the beautiful Mahouni.

The captain, who had not the same reason as the chevalier for remarking her, repeated his question.

"Who?" he asked, the second time.

"No one," said the chevalier, falling back.

One would have said that the chevalier's retreat was a signal for the *séance* to end. In an instant the thirty bathers were on their feet. They ascended a little grassy knoll where their garments were strewn about, letting the water trickle a moment down their beautiful bodies as down so many bronze statues; then the water dried gradually, the drops became more rare, and one could have counted the pearls that rolled from brow to cheek, and from cheek to bosom; at last, each one wrung out her hair like a Venus Astarte leaving the sea, put on her gown, bound the scarf about her hips, and idly loitered along the path to her home.

The captain observed to his friend that it was their breakfast hour; he lighted a cigar, instinctively invited Dieudonné to have one, an invitation which Dieudonné refused (the canonesses among whom he had been reared held tobacco in abhorrence), and they resumed the way to the hut.

Whether by chance, or by a habit of orientation, the captain took the shortest route, so that on the way they overtook the beautiful Mahouni, who had herself from indifference chosen the longest.

Upon seeing the two friends, she waited at one side of the path, with cambering hip, in one of those attitudes that women take when alone, and that an artist can never obtain from his model. Then, being fond of the luxury of a cigar, so despised by Dieudonné, she said to the captain,—

"*Ma ava ava iti*," which, in the Tahitian language, signified, "Give me a cigar, dear."

The captain did not understand her words, but, as she executed the pantomine of inhaling and exhaling smoke, he understood its significance. He took a cigar from his pocket and gave it to her.

"*Nar, dar*," said she, pushing away the fresh cigar, and pointing to the one burning in the captain's mouth.

Dumesnil understood that the capricious child wished the lighted cigar. He gave it to her.

The Tahitienne quickly drew two whiffs, which she quickly expelled. Then she drew a third, making it as full as possible. After that, she coquettishly bowed to the officer, and went on, with her head thrown back and making rings with the smoke she carried in her mouth, emitting it vertically into the air. All this was accompanied with that movement of the hips whose secret the captain had thought until then only Spanish women possessed.

Dumesnil cast a side glance toward his friend, who walked along with lowered eyes, and softly murmured a name. That name was Mathilde's. But Dumesnil remarked with much satisfaction that Dieudonné now whispered low the name that he had once cried aloud.

When she had emitted her last puff of smoke, the young girl detached her sash from her hips, stretched it above her head at arm's-length, and disappeared around

the corner of a citron grove. One would have said that a butterfly had flitted away.

On reaching the hut, the two friends found their table spread. It held, as on the preceding evening, a tray of bread-fruit, a root of manioc roasted in the ashes, fruit of all kinds, and milk and butter. No one was in sight; they could have fancied the table to have been set by the hands of the fairies.

But the breakfast hour of their hostess seemed to be the same as that of her guests; for Dieudonné, who was so seated as to command a view through the side of the hut, saw the young girl reach up, on tiptoe, to take down a little basket suspended from a branch of a gardenia, and then, sitting down with her back against the trunk of a tree, she proceeded to take her breakfast out of it. The breakfast consisted of half a dozen figs, a section of fruit resembling a melon, a bit of fish wrapped in a banana-leaf and cooked in the ashes, and a slice of bread-fruit.

The chevalier forgot to eat while watching Mahouni.

Dumesnil noticed his friend's distraction; he turned his head and saw the young girl breakfasting quite unconscious of them.

"Ah," said the captain, "you are watching our hostess."

The chevalier blushed. "Yes," he assented.

"Shall I tell her to come and breakfast with us?"

"Oh, no, no!" said the chevalier; "I was only thinking how fresh and cool it is under the trees."

"Shall we go and breakfast with her?"

"No indeed, no indeed!" replied the chevalier, "we are comfortable here; but let us change places, the sun hurts my eyes."

The captain shook his head. It was evident that he

knew what luminary had dazzled the chevalier. He said no more, however, and they exchanged places.

After breakfast the chevalier inquired, "What are we going to do?"

"Oh," replied the captain, "what every one does here after breakfast,—take a nap."

"Ah, yes," assented the chevalier; "in fact I slept so badly last night that I am quite upset."

"A nap will refresh you."

"I think so."

And they both went to seek a suitable place, a siesta in the open air being much more agreeable than in the huts, however well ventilated they may be. But the chevalier did not wish to be disturbed during his nap. The captain suggested the garden as being a suitable place, and thither they bent their steps.

The chevalier halted at a soft bed of turf shaded by a gardenia, whose branches, bending almost to the ground, formed a perfect tent. A spring of water, cool and pure, issued forth from the roots of the gardenia, rendering the turf that had attracted the chevalier somewhat humid.

Dumesnil, more concerned about material things than his friend, had taken the precaution to bring a mat, which he stretched out upon the dewy grass.

"Stay here, if this suits you," said he; "I will find a place as well shaded where the grass is drier."

Dieudonné seldom replied when his friend had decided upon a plan; he spread out the mat, upon which four persons could have lain, searched around for projecting pebbles that might cause him discomfort, and, only then discovering the size of the mat, he turned to observe to the captain that it seemed large enough for two.

But the captain had disappeared. The chevalier there-

fore concluded to monopolize the mat. He took off his redingote, rolled it up as a pillow for his head, watched for a while the sun's unsuccessful attempts to penetrate the branches of the gardenia, followed with languid eyes the evolutions of two birds that seemed carved from very sapphire, shut his eyes, opened them, shut them again, gave a sigh, and was asleep.

XII.

HOW THE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE LEARNED TO SWIM.

Sleep was no very safe refuge against the waking dreams by which the chevalier had been visited since the previous night. In fact, his sleep was very much disturbed.

At first, he dreamed of the beautiful swimmers of the preceding day, — only, like the sirens of Cape Circe, they terminated in fish, and each held in her hand a lyre, or an instrument of some kind, as an accompaniment for her voice, ravishingly sweet and eloquent of love; but the chevalier, brought-up on the mythological traditions handed down to the eighteenth century, knowing the danger of such a concert, turned away his head, and, like Ulysses, stopped his ears. Then he found himself on land, — where, he knew not; doubtless it was at Thebes or Memphis, for, on the right and the left, all along his way, crouching on marble pedestals, he saw those monsters having a lion's body and the head and breast of a woman, — the symbol of Neith, the goddess of Wisdom, which antiquity has christened with the name of Sphinx. But, instead of being marble like their pedestals, these Sphinxes were alive, although chained to their places; their eyes opened and shut, their breasts heaved and fell, and it seemed to the chevalier that they regarded him with looks of love. At last, one, with an effort, raised a paw and extended it toward the chevalier, who, to

avoid the touch, sprang aside; but a second sphinx raised a paw in her turn, seeing which, the others did the same thing. And yet it was evident that the Egyptian monsters — their gentle looks and agitated breasts vouched for it — had no ill intentions toward the chevalier. On the contrary. But the chevalier seemed to fear their good-will more than their ill-will. He sought how and whither to flee. It was not an easy thing to do; the pedestals began to move, as if impelled by a powerful machine, and he found himself completely surrounded.

At this crisis, it seemed to the chevalier that a cloud swept near him, in form like those on which the sleeping princesses descend at the theatres. This cloud appeared to await merely the instant of the chevalier's lying down upon it, to quit the earth. And as the eyes of the monsters became increasingly tender, and their bosoms throbbed more and more violently, while their claws almost touched the collar of his coat, he no longer hesitated; he reclined upon his cloud, and it flew away with him.

But it then seemed to poor Dieudonné that the cloud was alive; that its fleece was only a robe of gauze; that the firm part on which he rested was a body; that the body, like that of Iris, Juno's messenger, who traversed space like this cloud, was a young girl's with rounded limbs, palpitating flesh, and kindling breath. She had saved the chevalier, but it was for herself; she was bearing him away, but it was to her grotto. She laid him down upon a bed of fine sand, but stationed herself at his side; and, as if her breath must transmit into his human breast the fire that burned in hers divine, the beautiful messenger seemed to breathe the fire of her heart upon his lips.

The sensation was so vivid that the chevalier uttered

a cry and awoke. It had been but half a dream. Mahouni was lying beside him, and it was the young Tahitienne's breath by which he had been fanned. Like the chevalier, after her breakfast, Mahouni had sought a place in which to enjoy her siesta. She had discovered the chevalier asleep in the most charming nook of the garden, on a mat that was three times too large for one person: she, charming daughter of Nature, had seen no harm in borrowing from him, for an hour or two, that part of the mat for which he had no use. And upon that part of the mat she had gone to sleep as innocently as a child beside its mother. But, being herself agitated during her sleep, by some dream, no doubt, she had extended her arm, her chest had heaved, and her warm breath just then had touched the chevalier's lips.

She slept on.

The chevalier gently removed from his shoulder the young girl's arm which had been thrown across it, releasing himself with every precaution. He regained his feet with difficulty, and once upon them he began to run without knowing whither he went, abandoning the redingote that he had arranged as a cushion for his own head, and which at that moment was serving to pillow Mahouni's.

The chevalier escaped in the direction of the sea, nor did he stop until it became an obstacle in his path. It was almost one o'clock in the afternoon, which is as much as to say, the sun in its zenith possessed the sky, and consequently the earth. The chevalier reflected upon what sweet enjoyment, what soft delight must be experienced by swimmers, who, like fish or Tahitian women, can glide through the waves. Thereupon he regretted with almost a pang that he had not been taught that indispensable part of a man's education. But,

without knowing how to swim, he could at least enjoy the coolness of the water. He had noticed in the broken outlines of the shore, natural grottos where the sea formed shallow bathing-pools. There were to be found the two delights he sought, shade and coolness.

The chevalier resolved to enjoy them. He followed the beach, a difficult task even when the tide was low; and, as if he had held a fairy's wand with which to conjure up his desires, he found a grotto which seemed to have been fashioned with Calypso's as a model. He looked around on all sides to assure himself that it was unoccupied. The grotto was quite deserted. The chevalier thought, therefore, that his modesty ran no risks; he removed, one after another, every article of dress, placed them all in a miniature grot beside the larger one, and, testing the depth with his feet, he passed under the arch described by the rock.

At the deepest place, the chevalier found not more than three feet of water. This water, warm, but refreshed by the shade of the overhanging rock, afforded him one of the most delightful sensations that he had ever experienced. He asked himself how it was possible that a man should not have learned how to swim. But he reflected that, to learn to swim, one exhibits himself almost naked to other men; and Dieudonné, thanks to the canonesses, had been raised with such ideas of delicacy that he shuddered even at the thought of learning to swim with Dumesnil, who, nevertheless, was his best friend. Happily, he had discovered this grotto; he would not speak of it to any one, and he would spend a part of every day in it, the enjoyment he experienced being such that it could take the place of all recreation.

It is evident that the mind itself demands no distraction when the material comfort is such that a man's entire

physical and intellectual faculties are enlisted in the appreciation of it.

The chevalier thus remained an hour or two, plunged into a state of beatitude that did not permit him even to measure the time. Suddenly he was snatched from this ecstatic condition by the sound of a heavy body which struck the water. He had vaguely seen something flash through the air, but it was impossible to say what. In a moment, he saw a laughing face rising to the surface of the water. It was Mahouni's. She uttered some words that seemed a call to her companions. The call was not in vain. A body traversed space, passing with the swiftness of lightning, and was buried in the water with the same sound that the chevalier had already heard. Then a third, then a fourth; then ten, then twenty.

They were the same beautiful idlers whom the chevalier had seen in the morning taking their bath in the river, and who, to vary their pleasures, now took it in the sea.

The heads all reappeared, one after the other; then these daughters of Amphitrite, as a Greek poet would have said, abandoned themselves to their favorite amusement, that of swimming. Dieudonné saw them, but they did not see him, concealed as he was in the gloom of his grotto.

Another hour passed away, which, we must confess, the chevalier did not find longer than the first. We must even add that, so closely was his attention devoted to the spectacle before his eyes, he failed to notice that the water had risen until it reached his armpits. It was simply the rising tide.

Dieudonné had not foreseen this phenomenon, and he experienced real anxiety only upon beholding his garments floating off on the water. The grotto in which he

had left them being lower than the other, the sea had reached it first, and had borne away the chevalier's clothing.

Seeing his apparel tossing on the waves, the chevalier was impelled to cry out; but that would reveal his presence to the women: he dared not do it. If only he could have had on his back the garments that went dancing away, he might not have hesitated to appear, being clothed, in their presence; for they did not appear to be like goddesses who would punish him as Actæon was punished. But if he had been dressed, he would have had no reason for calling them.

The chevalier deceived himself, for his situation was becoming serious. The water, which scarcely came up to his waist when he had entered the grotto, and which had gradually risen to his armpits, now reached his chin. By going back a few paces, he could gain a foot, indeed. But the chevalier began to comprehend the situation. The tide crept on; and, looking round him, he could see the height which it would attain in the cave. At full tide, there would be four feet of water above his head. The chevalier felt himself grow faint; a cold sweat dampened his brow.

At this moment the swimmers gave a shout; they had just caught sight of his garments. As they did not understand the significance of the clothing, they came swimming toward the cave. But, instead of calling them to his aid, Dieudonné, filled with shame, withdrew from sight. One girl seized the vest, another the trousers, another the shirt, all appearing meanwhile to ask each other how the things got there. There was no mistake about it, they were the clothes of a European.

The chevalier longed to claim his property; but when he had redeemed them what could he do with them,

drenched as they were? They would be a parcel to save along with himself, and there was now no chance of escape even for himself. The water steadily rose. The chevalier knew that in ten minutes it would be above his head. One wave, advancing a little farther than the others, dashed its spray into his face. Involuntarily he cried out.

The swimmers heard him.

A second wave followed the first. Dieudonné thought of the captain, and, as if the latter could hear, he cried, "Help, Dumesnil! help!"

The bathers did not understand the words, but there was in their utterance such an accent of distress that they knew them to come from one who was threatened by death. Evidently, the cry issued from the cave. One of them penetrated it, swimming between two waves. Suddenly, not more than two feet from him, the chevalier saw a head rise. It was Mahouni's. She divined the chevalier's predicament, from his disconcerted countenance. She gave a shout; her companions all hastened to the spot.

The chevalier found himself exactly in the situation of Virginia on the deck of the "Saint-Geran," — saved, if she would accept the aid of the naked sailor who offered to carry her ashore; lost if she refused.

The Tahitiennes made Dieudonné understand by their gestures, and tried to make him understand by their words, that he had only to lean on them and they would take him ashore. Two of their number, side by side, formed a sort of raft on which he could support himself, with right hand and left resting on a shoulder of each.

Let us do the chevalier the justice to say that he hesitated a moment, that for an instant he entertained the chaste intention of dying like the maid of the Isle of

France. But love for life prevailed. He closed his eyes, extended himself on his mobile raft, grasped the round shoulders of the lovely nymphs, and departed.

Murmured he the name of Mathilde? We were not there, and we cannot tell.

Three or four months after this event, of which he carefully refrained from speaking to the captain, Dieudonné, while hunting sea-birds with his friend, imprudently leaned over the side of the boat and fell into the sea.

The captain uttered a cry of dismay, and quickly threw off his coat and vest to jump after Dieudonné. But just as he was about to accomplish this act of devotion, he saw, to his intense amazement, the chevalier rise to the surface of the sea, by the aid of a vigorous kick in the water, and thereupon strike out, not like a *caleçon rouge*, but like an accomplished *caleçon bleu*. Dumesnil was so surprised at what he saw that he stood not only mute, but motionless.

"Now, then," said Dieudonné, "give me your hand and help me into the boat."

Dumesnil put out his hand; the chevalier climbed in.

"But where the devil did you learn to swim?" demanded Dumesnil.

Dieudonné reddened to his ears.

"Ah, sly dog!" said the captain. Then, exploding with laughter, he added: "Come, agree with me that there are swimming-masters here equal to those of Deligny."

Dieudonné did not reply; but the ease with which he had extricated himself from peril proved that the captain was right.

XIII.

MAN PROPOSES AND GOD DISPOSES.

Several years sped away in this terrestrial paradise. Dieudonné was not wholly, but almost, cured of the profound melancholy which he had brought from France.

All the credit of this mental quasi-cure should be accorded to the captain, as the honor of the physical cure belonged to the physician. It is true that the one, like the other, had employed the means placed in his hands by Nature; but these means were, on the whole, merely the remedies; the true healer was he who had directed their employment.

The chevalier, then, appeared to be happy; if he still pronounced the name of Mathilde, it was only in a dream. When awake, his will was stronger, and if there was not a cure, there was at least a victory.

Not once during all those years had the question arisen of the chevalier's returning to France; and not a single time had he seemed in the least regretful of it, although he was not unmindful. It is true that during the whole period the captain, constantly on the watch for something to divert his friend, studious of all that could give him pleasure, engaged in maintaining for him the little attentions and services to which his education and his household had accustomed him, had never allowed his brow to become overclouded without essaying to clear it by recounting some gay reminiscence of his youth; in short, Dumesnil had never rested a moment from the burden that remorse had imposed on him.

Considering the affectionate nature of the Chevalier de la Graverie, one can understand how dear, and above all how necessary, the friend to whom he owed this tranquillity had become. The grown-up child always needed a mother, or, at the very least, a nurse. Thus Dieudonné had wholly lost his habit of directing himself, physically and mentally; he lived, loved, enjoyed, for himself alone.

But the captain was compelled to think for two.

One evening, as they were walking together, the captain smoking, and the chevalier nibbling at bits of sugar, surrounded by the charming feminine population, which begged for Dieudonné's fragments of sugar and Dumesnil's cigar-ends, and an occasional sip of cognac to boot, giving in exchange fragrance, favor, and grace, the captain suddenly felt indisposed. Dumesnil, who had the health of a Hercules, paid no attention to his own discomfort, and wished to continue his walk; but in a short time his limbs failed him, beads of perspiration stood upon his brow, and he was so overcome by weakness that a seat was brought, while his friend supported him lest he should fall. There was no struggle; some disease had developed itself with an appalling intensity of symptoms. The chevalier raised a cry for a doctor.

At that time, which was before the English invasion and the French protectorate, there was no garrison on the island, and, consequently, no physician except the indigenous charlatans who by the aid of herbs and incantations pretended to cure, and cured, perhaps (it is a hypothesis that admits of doubt, I grant), as well as the big-wigs.

Mahouni, at all times disposed to render the chevalier every service in her power, volunteered to summon one of these empirics. But the chevalier, who had learned

to speak the Tahitian language fluently, told her that he wished a European physician, a French one if possible; and that, as there were vessels of all nations in the harbor, and the evening before, among others, a French ship had been signalled, she must go to this one for help.

Mahouni repeated several times the French word for physician, achieved an intelligible pronunciation, and darting off, took a header into the sea above the grotto known to us, and swam like a gold-fish towards the ship whose tri-color proclaimed her to be French.

The last line implies that, during the chevalier's stay at Tahiti, the revolution of 1830 had taken place; but the change which, had the chevalier remained in France, would in all probability have overthrown most things in his life, passed almost unnoticed by him at the distance of three thousand five hundred leagues from Paris.

Upon reaching the waters of the "Dauphin," the French brig, Mahouni raised her beautiful torso from the water, and shouted with all her might, yet in tones of wonderful sweetness,—

"*Un midissin! un midissin!*"

In spite of the slight change the Tahitienne had made in the word, the captain understood perfectly what the swimmer demanded; he conjectured that Queen Pomare was ill, and ordered the ship's physician, a young man of twenty-six or twenty-seven years, who was on his first voyage, to go ashore.

When Mahouni saw a boat lowered with the doctor in the boat, she knew that she had been understood; and notwithstanding the efforts the young doctor made to induce her to return with him in the barge, she plunged, reappeared twenty paces away, dived again to appear yet farther away, and, well in advance of the boat and its

four oarsmen, she regained Papaete. Then, she ran at once to the house of the two friends, one of the nearest to the shore, and cried: —

"*Midissin! midissin!*"

After which she returned to the beach to guide the doctor.

The boat had, in a manner, followed in the wake of the young swimmer, and it made the shore just as she herself returned to it. The young physician leaped ashore, followed his guide, and in a few moments was at the door of the hut. The chevalier rushed out to him, and while presenting excuses for the inconvenience which he was caused, led him to the captain's bedside.

The doctor, seeing that he had to do with Frenchmen, now understood why the messenger had addressed herself to the "Dauphin" in preference to any other vessel. He therefore asked no questions, and at once advanced to the sick man.

"What!" he exclaimed, "is it you, captain?"

The captain, already in a state of almost total collapse, opened his eyes, in turn recognized the doctor, smiled, extended his hand, and with an effort gasped, —

"Yes, here I am, you see."

"Unfortunately, yes," said the doctor; "but this will be nothing. Courage! Tell me your symptoms."

The chevalier wished very much to ask how the doctor and the captain happened to know each other; but, observing that Dumesnil had begun to describe his symptoms, he postponed the question.

"It is difficult," said the captain, "to say how I feel. I was suddenly seized with a disagreeable sensation, followed by prostration which forced me to return to the house and go immediately to bed."

"And since lying down?"

"I have experienced starts and shivers, with alternating chills and dry heat."

"A glass of water," demanded the doctor. Then, presenting it to the sick man, he commanded, "Try to drink it."

Dumesnil swallowed a few mouthfuls.

"It is repulsive," said he, "and I swallow with difficulty."

The doctor pressed two fingers a little below the stomach. The sick man uttered a cry.

"You have not yet experienced nausea?" asked the doctor.

"Not yet," replied the patient.

The doctor looked around for paper and pen. There was not, be it understood, paper or pen in the hut. Dumesnil asked for his travelling-case. It was brought. He wore the key to it suspended from his neck. The captain opened the travelling-case cautiously, and as if it contained things that must not be seen; he extracted from it paper, ink, and a pen, which he handed to the doctor, who wrote a few lines and asked that they should be sent to his boat.

It was an order to his assistant to take from the ship's pharmacy and send to him, immediately, some laudanum, ether, mint essence, and ammonia.

As Mahouni could not give the necessary instructions to the rowers, the chevalier charged himself with carrying the note to the barge. He gave a louis to the four sailors to hasten their speed, and they pushed off their boat, which glided immediately over the calm surface of the roadstead, like the long-legged spiders that skim along the surface of lakes. He then returned to the house.

The doctor was absent; the chevalier inquired where he had gone, and was answered by the captain's pointing

towards the river. The chevalier was anxious to speak with him alone. He started upon his track, and found him up to his knees in the water, gathering an herb that is called the river poléon.

"Ah, doctor! I was looking for you."

The doctor greeted the chevalier, and resumed his task, like a man who understands that he has been asked for news, and knows that he has nothing very good to communicate.

"You were acquainted, then, with Captain Dumesnil?" insisted the chevalier.

"I saw him yesterday for the first time, on board of the 'Dauphin,'" replied the doctor.

"On board of the 'Dauphin!' And what did he go aboard the 'Dauphin' for?"

"He came to see if we had any news from France; and he was so determined to speak to one of our passengers that, although we notified him of the presence of yellow fever, he insisted on boarding us."

The physician's words were as a thunderbolt to the chevalier.

"The yellow fever!" cried he. "Then Dumesnil has the yellow fever?"

"I fear it," replied the young man.

"But the yellow fever," stammered Dieudonné, shivering, "people die of it!"

"If you were the captain's mother, or sister, or son, I should reply, 'Sometimes!' You are a man, you are only his friend; I will answer, 'Almost always!'"

The chevalier uttered a cry. "But," he demanded, "are you sure that he has the yellow fever?"

"I still hope that it may prove to be acute gastritis," replied the doctor; "the early symptoms are the same."

"And you could save him from acute gastritis?"

"I should at least have more hope."

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried the chevalier, bursting into tears.

The doctor gazed at this man, who wept with sobs and a woman's flood of tears.

"Is the captain, then, your kinsman?" asked he.

"He is more than kin," responded Dieudonné, "he is my friend."

"Sir," said the young man, touched by this great grief, and extending his hand to Dieudonné, "from the moment of your applying to me, you may be sure that your friend shall not want care. In France, Frenchmen are only compatriots; abroad, they are brothers."

"Oh, my God! my God! Why did he go aboard that ship? Why did he not send me? If he had sent me, I should have been ill, and not he; I should die instead of Dumesnil."

The doctor stared with positive admiration at this man, who so simply offered his life to God in exchange for that of the man he loved.

"Monsieur," said he, "I assure you that I have not lost all hope. This may as easily be a gastric fever as the yellow fever; with a little blood-letting we shall make an end of it."

"But who was the passenger with whom he had such important business?"

"A friend of his."

"Dumesnil has no friend but me, as I have none but him," sadly replied the chevalier.

"Nevertheless, they embraced," said the doctor, "like two men rejoiced to see each other."

"And what is the man's name?" demanded the chevalier.

"Baron de Chalier," answered the doctor.

"Baron de Chalier — Baron de Chalier — I do not recognize the name. Ah, why did he not send me to speak with this cursed Baron de Chalier?"

"Because," said the young physician, significantly, "because he probably did not wish you to know the business he was engaged upon; which means, that I beg you not to say a word to him of my indiscretion, as, in his present state, the least annoyance might prove fatal to him."

"Ah, monsieur, be at ease on that score," said the chevalier, giving him his hand, "I shall not breathe a word of it to him."

They went back to the hut; the chevalier advanced to the bedside and took Dumesnil's burning hands in his own, unconcerned as to anything save his friend's condition.

"Well," he asked, "how do you feel?"

"Badly. I have horrible pain in the epigastric region."

"I am going to bleed you," said the doctor. Then, turning to Dieudonné, he said: "Chevalier, steep this herb in a little water."

The chevalier obeyed with the passiveness of a child and the promptness of a nurse.

Meanwhile the doctor bandaged the sick man's arm and prepared his lancet. The veins of the arm became distended.

"Chevalier," said the doctor, "leave the tisane to the woman, and hold this basin."

The chevalier obeyed.

The doctor pricked the vein; but there was already so great a derangement of the system that the blood refused to flow. He made a deeper incision. This time the blood followed, but it was black and already decomposed.

A few drops spurted into the chevalier's face. Feeling the warm moisture spreading on his face, the chevalier fell backward and fainted.

The captain seemed anxious to profit by the occurrence.

"Monsieur," said he, addressing the young doctor, "this is a mortal seizure; I know it. I pray you tell Monsieur de Chalier that I commend to him anew the child of whom I spoke yesterday, and that I beg of him, if chance should bring about a meeting between him and the Chevalier de la Graverie, not to speak of it to him, unless reasons of the highest importance to Thérèse should arise that make it necessary that she should be recognized; I leave him to judge of those reasons. Have you heard and understood me perfectly?"

"Yes, captain," said the physician, who perceived the importance of the mission, "and I will now endeavor to repeat your message to you, word for word."

And, in fact, without change either in form or in detail, he repeated the captain's charge.

"That is right!" said the sick man. Then he turned towards the young girl. "Mahouni," said he to the Tahitienne, "throw some cold water into the poor chevalier's face."

Mahouni, who, crouched before the fire caring for the herb-tea, had not noticed the chevalier's fainting-fit, obeyed the captain's order with an eagerness which betrayed the interest she felt for her swimming-pupil. The chevalier revived just as the doctor had closed his patient's vein.

The blood-letting momentarily relieved the captain; but, about two o'clock in the morning, in spite of the use of opium and ether, the vomiting set in.

The doctor cast a glance at the chevalier which seemed to say: "This is what I feared."

The chevalier understood, and went away to weep by himself.

The next day passed with alternations of good and bad symptoms. Towards evening, however, the bad ones had entirely gained the mastery. The face was purple, deglutition almost impossible; the vomit, bilious at first, had become almost black and fuliginous, and it was easy to recognize the particles of decomposed blood. The physician had removed the dressing from the arm, and had found the wound encircled with black. He had taken the chevalier aside, and as the captain was still in full possession of his faculties, he had informed the chevalier of his friend's hopeless condition, in order that no time should be lost if the latter had any testamentary provisions to make.

As for the doctor, he was obliged, he said, to return to the ship, if only for a few hours; he would come back the next day, and he wrote out for the chevalier the treatment to be followed, the chief point of which was to keep up the captain's spirits as long as possible.

The recommendation was useless: the well man was weak; the sick one, strong.

From the moment when the captain had taken to his bed the chevalier had not left his pillow, rendering in turn all the care that he himself had received when suffering from a broken leg; watching him with the assiduity and the affection of a mother, not allowing him to receive a cup of tisane from any hand other than his own.

And there was great merit in poor Dieudonné's conduct; for his anguish was so keen that, twenty times, feeling himself falter, he was upon the point of deserting his post and fleeing, that he might not witness his friend's suffering. It has been seen that he fainted at the mere

touch of the captain's blood. It was much worse now that the doctor had all but avowed to the poor chevalier that there was no longer hope. If the patient moved in his bed, Dieudonné felt the drops of cold sweat oozing from his whole body; if, on the contrary, Dumesnil, dozed, Dieudonné considered that a most unfavorable symptom, and, shaking the sick man, he would inquire, —

"How do you feel? Answer me! Oh, answer me!"

If the sick man made no response, he would wring his hands and burst into sobs.

In the midst of one of these explosions of grief Dumesnil, who was not asleep, but was meditating, felt that the time had come when he should give his friend his last instructions.

The captain's was a strong and stoical spirit; he faced fearlessly — for himself at least — the gloomy passage he was about to make, and at this moment he was troubled only by the thought of the loneliness to which he was leaving his friend.

"Come, my dear Dieudonné," said he, "put an end to these tears and lamentations, unworthy of a man, and let me give you some advice concerning the way in which you should order your life when I am no longer a part of it."

At the sick man's first words, the chevalier grew calm as if by magic. Dumesnil, who had not spoken for nearly two hours, was speaking, and so calmly that he could believe the Lord had performed a miracle in his behalf; but when he came to the words, "when I am no longer a part of it," Dieudonné uttered a cry of despair, threw himself upon the bed of the dying man, taking him in his arms and bewailing the injustice of Providence, the rigor of fate.

The captain's spent forces were unable to struggle against his friend's exuberance of grief; he summoned up his whole remaining strength and exclaimed in a dying voice, "Dieudonné, you are killing me!"

The chevalier made a leap backward; then, with clasped hands, he threw himself on his knees beside the bed, imploring him, —

"Forgive me, Dumesnil, forgive me! I will not move, I will not breathe, I will listen scrupulously."

But great tears rolled down his cheeks.

Dumesnil regarded him with profound pity. "Do not weep so, my poor comrade; I need all my strength to make the last march as becomes a man and a soldier, but your grief tortures my soul." Then, with military firmness, he continued: —

"We must separate, for this world, Dieudonné."

"No! no! no!" cried Dieudonné, "you will not die! it is impossible!"

"Yet, it is what awaits us all, dear old fellow," said the sick man.

"Never to see you! never to see you! God is not so cruel," cried Dieudonné.

"Unless I find metempsychosis to be the order of the day up there," said the captain, smiling, "we must play out our part in this terrible separation, my poor friend."

"Oh, Lord! Lord!" groaned Dieudonné.

"But, I must confess, it is hardly more probable than my resurrection."

"Metempsychosis?" mechanically repeated Dieudonné.

"Yes, metempsychosis; in that case, on both knees I will beg the Almighty God to put me into the skin of the first dog that comes, in which, no matter where I shall be, I will break my chain to go and rejoin you."

This jest, made at the threshold of eternity, failed to

awaken stoicism in the heart of Dieudonné; he raised his eyes to heaven, and held Dumesnil in close embrace.

"Come, courage!" resumed the latter; "in truth, of us two it is you that seem to be quitting the world. While I have strength, let me give you some good advice: stay here if you can, although, without me, I doubt if you could amuse yourself much."

"Oh, no, no!" cried Dieudonné; "if I am so unhappy as to lose you, I shall return to France."

"As you will, my poor friend. In that case, take my body back there; that will afford you a melancholy diversion, and it will seem as if you had not quite taken leave of me. I am from a poor provincial town, very gloomy and dull, — from Chartres; but at Chartres my father, my mother, and a sister that I loved dearly are buried. Our family has a vault, in which there remains one vacant niche; place me in it, and then have the door sealed upon me. I am the last of the family. That ceremony performed, isolate yourself, lead a bachelor's life, an egoist's; be a gourmand, love with your stomach, but never love again with your heart, not even a rabbit, — some one will put it on the spit. Ah, my poor Dieudonné, you are not strong enough to love!"

Dumesnil fell back upon his pillow, exhausted. A few moments later he became delirious. But in his delirium one idea seemed to haunt the dying man; it was that of metempsychosis. He muttered: —

"A dog — a good dog — black dog — Dieudonné!"

It was evident that the last thought of this departing soul was that of not abandoning his friend.

Meanwhile, the doctor entered; he had come back to acquit his conscience, and because he had promised to return. At the first glance towards the captain, he understood that all was ended.

As for Dieudonné, upon hearing the labored and sibilant breathing, the death-rattle, herald of the last sigh, he had fallen upon his knees, sobbing, and in his despair even biting the bed-covers, but gradually yielding to a stupor, from which he emerged only upon hearing the words pronounced by the doctor: —

"He is dead!"

Then he arose, shrieking, and with an indescribable outburst of grief he flung himself upon the corpse in such close embrace that force had to be employed to separate him from it.

XIV.

THE RETURN TO FRANCE.

Happily, when dying, the captain had left a duty for Dieudonné to perform. He knew his friend well when he told Dieudonné that the charge he had intrusted to him of taking his body back to France would constitute a melancholy diversion.

Solitude is what weak natures dread most. Only choice souls dare withdraw themselves to suffer; the great majority of men, on the contrary, hasten to excite their griefs to excess, as if foreseeing that tranquillity must follow close upon exhaustion.

The "Dauphin," which was making the tour of the world, and which had taken the yellow fever aboard at Manilla, continued on her way to France by way of Cape Horn, and weighed anchor on the morrow.

This was just what the chevalier needed; alone, he would have hated this earthly paradise where he had been so happy with his friend. He wrote to the captain of the "Dauphin," asking for passage on board his ship for himself and the remains of his friend.

The young doctor charged himself with negotiating the business; it is unnecessary to add that he was easily successful. Returning to the hut, he found Dieudonné engaged in the construction of a coffin according to French ideas, by the aid of native carpenters. The island abounds in iron-wood, the best of all woods for this purpose.

Dieudonné took from the captain's neck the little key of the travelling-case, and, as the captain had in his agony often directed his eyes to that article, seeming to commend it to his care, he hung the little key about his own neck, happy to feel there this memento of his friend. He then caused the remains to be enshrouded in the whitest cloth that he could find, himself covered the bottom of the coffin with banana and pandanus leaves, placed the body upon this soft couch, which the women of the island strewed with flowers taken from their hair and ears, kissed his friend's brow for the last time, and had the coffin nailed up. Every blow of the hammer forced a moan from his heart, but, in spite of all entreaties, he remained until the last nail was driven.

Meanwhile night came on.

In the morning the "Dauphin's" boat was to come for the dead and the living; and as, in accordance with a superstition widespread among the inhabitants of the country, the owners of the house were unwilling that a corpse should pass the night under their roof, Dieudonné had the coffin placed beneath the tree under which Mahouni had slept during the first night which he had passed on the island. He then spread out his rug, putting one end of it over the coffin, and, weeping, he lay down with his head upon the captain's bier.

The next day he gathered up all that had belonged to Dumesnil, — clothes, arms, canes, *et cetera*. Most important of all was the travelling-case.

But Dieudonné did not yet feel strong enough to open that; without doubt it contained some will, some last directions which must rend his heart. He told himself that the time to open it would be in France, at Chartres, on the evening of the captain's burial. He then distributed among his tearful friends — naturally giving to Mahouni

the better part of them — all the little articles that these naïve daughters of nature had seemed to covet.

The hour arrived, the boat came to take away the chevalier. In addition to the four rowers, there were four sailors, a boatswain's mate, and the doctor.

The entire population of Papaete accompanied the coffin and the chevalier to the shore. They loved the captain, straightforward and abrupt. They adored the chevalier, sweet and gentle, always ready to give, and, when not giving, submitting to small robberies.

Arriving at the beach, the men took leave of their guest. The women were not willing to abandon him there; they cast themselves into the sea, and swam like sirens around the boat. Some, finding the course somewhat long, shouted their adieus to the chevalier and deserted him on the way. Five or six held out, and, on reaching the vessel, had Dieudonné been a Mohamedan, he could yet, according to the prophet's precepts, have taken four lawful wives.

Just as the chevalier was about to place his foot on the ship's ladder, Mahouni cast herself, weeping, into his arms, begging that he would take her to France.

The idea of the sacrifice offered him by this charming child of nature touched the chevalier profoundly; he hesitated as to accepting it, but recalled his friend's injunction: "Do not become attached even to a rabbit; some one will put it on the spit." He hardened his heart, turned away his head, put aside the beautiful Mahouni, and sprang up the vessel's side.

For a time the Tahitiennes swam around the brig like mermaids; but their friend, the chevalier, not reappearing, they departed, making for the shore of the island. Twice or thrice Mahouni paused and turned her head in the direction of the brig; but not seeing Dieudonné, she

knew herself to be forsaken, dived to wash away her tears, and reappeared with a smile upon her lips and in her eyes.

We chronicle this fact in order that our readers, nurtured on romances in which the young islanders, when deserted by Europeans, die awaiting them on the shore, with their eyes turned in the direction whither the ingrate's ship has disappeared, — in order, we repeat, that our readers may not deliver themselves up to excessive sensibility in behalf of the Tahitian Ariadne.

Dieudonné had not reappeared on deck because he was installing in his cabin the coffin of his friend, from whom he was resolved not to part during the voyage.

While engaged with these details, a beautiful black spaniel entered the cabin, curiously regarding with great, intelligent, almost human eyes what the chevalier was doing. On perceiving the dog, the chevalier sank down upon a chair and began to weep. He recalled that sweet promise made by his friend scarcely twenty-four hours before: "If metempsychosis is possible, I will beseech the Almighty God to give me the skin of a dog, in which, no matter where I may be, I will break my chain to rejoin you." He took the animal's head between his hands as if it had been human.

The dog fled, frightened probably by the demonstration, in which the chevalier perhaps had not exercised all possible adroitness.

The chevalier, bathed in tears, asked the sailor that was helping him to complete his arrangements, who owned the beautiful spaniel, at once so friendly and so shy. The sailor informed him that she belonged to a passenger; and, probably to render her disappearance of less importance in the eyes of the chevalier, he added that she had, the night before, given birth to four magnificent puppies.

three of which had been thrown into the sea; and that her fear lest some mischance should overtake the fourth was undoubtedly the cause of her failure to respond more effusively to the chevalier's caresses.

"Besides," mused the chevalier, shaking his head, "he strictly charged me to become attached to nothing. The dog has done well to go, otherwise I must have driven her away."

The sailor overheard the chevalier's remark; but being a discreet fellow, although he did not comprehend it, he asked for no explanation.

In the evening, the wind being favorable, the captain decided to set sail; they weighed anchor and headed for Valparaiso, where the "Dauphin" must leave a passenger.

The chevalier had not forgotten his sufferings from seasickness during his voyage from Havre to New York, and from San Francisco to Tahiti; hence, as a preliminary precaution, as soon as he felt the motion of the ship under his feet, he stretched himself at full length in his berth, and commended himself to the steward.

The commendation was not unnecessary. After three days of superb weather, during which the chevalier did not venture to go on deck, there came a storm that troubled the waters for a fortnight. During this time the chevalier stayed in his berth, eating in bed, when he ate at all; and on these occasions he regularly saw the bitch-spaniel following close upon the heels of the steward, well aware of the profit to herself in this manœuvre, as the chevalier scarcely tasted his dishes, which came to her almost intact.

The little dog, the miniature of its mother, was charming. In spite of his resolution to become attached to nothing, the chevalier fondly caressed the little Black,—

as the tiny creature had been named, — giving him powdered sugar, which he licked up even to the last dust in the creases of the chevalier's hand. Ten times the chevalier was on the point of asking the sailor if he thought the owner of the little spaniel would part with it; but he would recall Dumesnil's injunction: "Do not become attached to anything!" and then he would reject the thought of giving to anything, even to a dog, any portion of the heart that ought to belong wholly to his friend.

Under other circumstances Dieudonné would have wearied of this long isolation and striven against it, even at the risk of aggravating his discomfort. But let it not be forgotten that he was not alone in his cabin. He had with him all that remained of the friend whom death had so cruelly taken; and he experienced the comforting sort of self-pity peculiar to certain tender natures when protesting that their love shall never diminish, that their tears shall never cease.

Four or five days more passed away without the sea's becoming calm; then, indeed, one morning without any warning, the vessel suddenly stopped.

Dieudonné called his attendant, and demanded the cause of the calm. The sailor informed him that they were in the roadstead of Valparaiso, and that if the chevalier would go on deck, he would behold the coast of Chili, and the entrance of that valley, so beautiful that it has received the name of Valparaiso, — *Vale of Paradise.*

The chevalier announced that he would rise; but as Black and his mother were present, he began first to make his customary distribution of bread and meat to the mother, and of sugar to the little one.

In the middle of the repast a sudden shrill whistle caused the mother to start and lift her head, but she

hesitated. A second whistle, followed by a call for "Diana," removed all hesitancy; evidently called by her master, the dog disappeared, followed by her little one.

The chevalier, finding the vessel quite stationary, thought he would make his toilet and go on deck. It was an affair of half an hour or so. Just as his head was appearing above the hatchway, a boat was putting out from the ship to land the passenger who was to disembark at Valparaiso.

Dazzled by the magnificence of the spectacle presented by that admirable Chilian coast, the chevalier approached the vessel's side. Simultaneously, his glance fell on the boat, already a hundred yards distant from the ship. He heaved a profound sigh. On board the boat was the beautiful spaniel, her lower jaw resting on the knee of the passenger who was leaving the vessel. He called to the steward.

"François!" demanded he, "are Black and his mother being taken away for good and all?"

"Undoubtedly, Monsieur le Chevalier," replied the man; "they belong to Monsieur de Chalier, and go with him."

Dieudonné remembered the name. It was that of the friend whom Dumesnil had gone aboard of the "Dauphin" to see, and who was the innocent cause of the captain's death. But, however innocent of that death Monsieur de Chalier might have been, Dieudonné bore him none the less ill-will.

"Ah," said he, "I am very glad that he is going, that Monsieur de Chalier whom Dumesnil loved so much; I should have been sorry to meet him. But," he added, "I regret the little dog."

Then he gave a gesture of melancholy satisfaction. "Good!" declared he, "it is just as well the animal

should not have remained on board; I was growing fond of it."

The next day they set sail; two months later, they disembarked at Brest. At last, at the end of a week, the chevalier entered Chartres with his sad charge.

XV.

IN WHICH THE CHEVALIER PERFORMS THE LAST RITES FOR HIS FRIEND AND SETTLES HIMSELF IN CHARTRES.

The chevalier descended at the hôtel, and immediately secured such information as he needed.

Captain Dumesnil's family had belonged to Chartres; but, as he had told Dieudonné, none of them now remained. Many Chartrains, however, had known the captain, and they rendered justice to his courage and loyalty.

The chevalier sought out the sexton, and was conducted to the tomb of the Dumesnils; as the captain had said, one niche remained vacant. Dieudonné had taken the precaution to secure a death-certificate from the doctor, signed by the captain and the mate of the "Dauphin," setting forth Dumesnil's death and identity. Armed with this mortuary certificate, he could claim and obtain that last couch of stone where his friend must sleep the eternal sleep. He issued invitations to all the notables of the town, and inserted notices in the papers announcing the death of Captain Dumesnil, whose remains would be interred on the following Monday.

Eight days must elapse between the invitations and notices and the burial. By this provision, if any relatives of Captain Dumesnil's were still alive those relatives would be apprised. If they were in the neighborhood of Chartres, they could be present at the funeral.

If they were at a distance, they could write and make themselves known, and claim heirship to the captain's property, — an inheritance consisting of a few hundred francs, the captain having no other fortune than the four or five hundred francs of his pension.

The funeral took place at the end of the eight days; no relatives appeared, but all the town assisted. The chevalier was the chief mourner, and certainly a son could not have evinced for a dead father grief more poignant than the chevalier's for his friend. His tears, barely dried, demanded only an occasion to flow anew, and he felt an inexpressible relief in shedding them.

The body having been placed in the vault, the chevalier desired to say a few words to the assemblage which, half from curiosity, half from sympathy, had followed the body of Captain Dumesnil to the cemetery; but sobs stifled his voice. It was the best way of thanking them. From that moment, if the chevalier was not deemed intellectual, he was known to be good-hearted.

The chevalier was accompanied as far as the door of his hôtel. It was upon re-entering his room that he found himself truly alone. He had not wept enough. He gathered together the various objects that had been the captain's, the travelling-case among them. These sacred relics again brought tears to his eyes.

Then it was that he formed the resolution to remain at Chartres. He had no preference for any other place in the world; he was perfectly suited with a dull and lonely town like Chartres, with its gigantic cathedral, whose two arms are unceasingly uplifted to heaven, as if imploring the Lord's mercy. He did not wish to see any of his former friends, any one who had known his wife, any one who could speak of her. And yet, singularly enough, in returning to France, he had been impelled by

a vague hope of meeting Mathilde. At the corner of every street into which he turned, it seemed to him that he must find himself face to face with her, that she would spring into his arms crying, "You have come!"

That very day the chevalier set out in quest of a house, and found in the Rue des Lices the one we have described. It seemed to him in every way suitable. He sent for an upholsterer and ordered such furniture as he desired, and wrote to his notary to forward all the money he might have for him, as also the best of his furniture and his plate, which Dumesnil, after the catastrophe, had stored in a secure place.

The notary, who during the chevalier's seven years' absence, had sent him not more than half of his income, could place the sum of thirty or forty thousand francs at his disposal. The chevalier had, in addition to this, an income of twenty thousand livres. At Chartres a man with an income of twenty thousand livres is immensely rich.

At the end of eight days, the house was in condition to receive the chevalier. His installation was a great event.

We have told, pray recall, how comfortably arranged were the salon, the cabinet for wines and relishes, and especially, the bed-chamber. We have, up to this time, intentionally neglected to describe the table that served for the chevalier's toilet. Call to mind the travelling-case which he had inherited from his friend Dumesnil, and the preoccupation with which the latter had regarded it in the last moments of his life. On the evening of his installation, the chevalier resolved to open it. Consequently, he summoned up his fortitude, collected himself, sat down on his fine Smyrna carpet, took the case between his legs, and opened it, after taking the precaution to place his handkerchief conveniently.

And, in fact, the first objects that met the chevalier's sight reopened the source of tears. They were the familiar toilet articles of the captain's, a man who had practised the most scrupulous care of his person. The chevalier drew them, one by one, from their sockets and ranged them around him.

After removing the last one, Dieudonné discovered that the case was provided with a double bottom. He sought the secret of this false bottom, finding it easily, as the workman who had designed it had not aimed at concealment. This section contained a package carefully tied and sealed, on whose wrapper the chevalier read these words: —

In the name of friendship and honor, two sacred things, I entreat my friend De la Graverie to give this package to Madame De la Graverie if he should ever see her again, and, should he never meet her, to burn it the day he learns of her death, *without seeking to know its contents.*

DUMESNIL.

The chevalier sat musing for a while; but he concluded that Dumesnil, having seen Mathilde while he himself was ill with the broken leg, had doubtless been charged by her with some commission which had or had not been executed, and of which the package contained the sequel. He therefore carefully put back the parcel into the bottom of the case, closed it, hung its key around his neck, and placed it in a cabinet at the head of his bed. He then arranged on his dressing-table the toilet articles which had belonged to the captain, and which, in memory of him, he intended to use. For several days, thoughts of the sealed package haunted his mind; but the idea of opening it to see what it contained, did not even present itself to the chevalier's mind.

Alone in a strange town, Dieudonné had not been forced to endure the commonplace condolences which would have lacerated, instead of comforting, a heart like his. The indifference of all surrounding him was the best possible remedy for his grief. Allowed full sway, it had spent itself the sooner because of its own violence. The chevalier had then fallen into a melancholy, profound but tranquil, and it was in this spirit that he had taken possession of his new dwelling.

The night before, he had discovered an old comrade of the Musketeers in an officer of the garrison; he had hesitated to renew acquaintance with him, but, reflecting that the garrison would leave the city on the morrow, he could foresee no inconvenience likely to result from it. The officer recognized him with great difficulty, so many years having elapsed since they had met.

Dieudonné inquired after people whom he had left young, brilliant, full of life and health. Many were lying in their graves, the young as well as the old. Death has no preferences, yet he sometimes appears to cherish hatreds.

The chevalier was keenly impressed by this refrain following upon the greater number of his interrogations: "He is dead!" So that, as a result of this necrological conversation, counting up those who had failed to respond to the roll-call, as a general counts his dead on the battlefield, he was confirmed in the resolution suggested by Dumesnil, and already rooted in his heart, to isolate himself henceforth from those ephemeral affections which demand the payment of so much anguish for the few joys they yield as if through pity. He decided to entrench himself as behind fortifications against all that could henceforth disturb his peaceful existence; and, as a beginning, on taking leave of the officer,— whom probably he

would never see again, as he set off the following day for Lille, — he pledged himself his word of honor never to inquire what had become of his elder brother, which was not very difficult, nor even, which was a very different sacrifice, what had become of Mathilde.

Thus isolating himself, there remained but one course for Dieudonné to pursue, — to devote himself to the cult of his own person, with moderation at first, with fanaticism next, and at last with idolatry. He established no relations with the society of Chartres, save such as were absolutely necessary to prevent his becoming an object of the annoying curiosity which all positive eccentricity engenders in a province, where the greatest of all, for a man who has lived in Paris, is to pretend to be contented among provincials. He was especially guarded lest his intercourse with others, whether charitable or social, should degenerate into intimacy. If, in the little circle of his acquaintances, he yielded to the charm of conversation; if, after some few agreeable moments, he perceived a shade of sympathy for a man; if the sensitive atoms of his brain or of his heart threatened to vibrate in unison with those of a woman, young or old, beautiful or ugly, — he regarded the tendency as a warning from heaven, and fled from the fascinator, whether man or woman, as if that creature had threatened to communicate the plague instead of agreeable sensations, reserving his best behavior for the foolish and the disagreeable, people who were not wanting in the town of his choice, sparsely populated as was the old Chartrain city.

The chevalier was not less strict in the ordering of his domestic life. He banished from his house dogs, cats, and birds, regarding them as sources of tribulation. He kept but a single servant, and always chose one skilled in cookery, but old and shrewish, that he might always be

able to keep her at a respectful distance from his heart, — remorselessly sending her away, not when she had displeased him, but, on the contrary, when he perceived that her services were becoming too agreeable.

In this respect, Heaven seemed determined to crown the desires of Monsieur de la Graverie, in giving him Marianne, — the servant, that is, who in the second chapter of this tale we have seen discharging a cataract upon the head of her master and that of the dog he had encountered. Marianne was ugly, and Marianne was conscious of her ugliness, which had not a little contributed to the endowment of a character the most disagreeable that Monsieur de la Graverie had ever had the fortune to meet with. Some heart affair, — for in spite of the imperfections of her physique, Marianne possessed a heart, — some heart affair had soured her character, and, under the specious pretext of avenging herself upon a Lancer who had wronged her, she martyrized poor Dieudonné, without in the least suspecting the satisfaction she afforded him in the possession of a servant to whom, with the best will in the world, it was impossible to become attached.

But, we must confess, Marianne's insolence, her crabbed and irritating disposition, her exasperating unreasonableness, were not the only qualifications militating in her favor with the chevalier. Marianne possessed the incontestable superiority of the true *cordon bleu* over the most boasted *chef* in Chartres, as we have hinted in the beginning of our story. Monsieur de la Graverie had adopted gourmandizing as his favorite sin. While shrivelling up his heart, he had considerably developed his stomach. The *menu* card played a conspicuous *rôle* in his life; and although a few indigestions had proved to him that, like all joys here below, those of the palate

have their reverse side, he no less patiently every day awaited the hour of his repast, nor did he place a lower valuation on Marianne's culinary skill.

By degrees, Monsieur de la Graverie had so accustomed himself to this snail's-existence, that the slightest incidents of his life became events. The humming of a mosquito threw him into a fever; and, as with all people who are excessively occupied with the care of their own persons, it had come to pass that by continually feeling his pulse, morally and physically, his repose did not cease to be troubled from one occasion to another. But this was all due to trifles seen through the magnifier of his disordered imagination; and latterly, enervated as he was by this absence of sensations, he feared so greatly everything that could disturb his peace that, like a coward, he was afraid of his shadow.

Yet it would not be just to suppose that the heart of Monsieur de la Graverie grew to be really bad, although it contracted something of the hardness of the shell into which it had withdrawn itself; but we must avow that, as a result of such constant preoccupation with self, his natural qualities, which by their excess had sometimes proved to be defects, had been considerably weakened, and they now fell as far short of the mark as they had formerly gone beyond it. His virtues became negative; he did not like to see his fellow-creatures suffer; but his humanity had its source in the nervous effect induced by the sight of sufferings which he might be called on to share, rather than in a sentiment of real benevolence. He would willingly have doubled the amount of his alms that he might be spared the sight of the beggars; pity, with him, had become a feeling in which the heart had ceased to take part, and the older he grew the more of a mummy his heart became. It is with our virtues and

vices as with the women we love; if we do not see them for a month, the month once run away, we can get along without them during the remainder of life.

Such, then, was the Chevalier de la Graverie at the end of eight or nine years of his residence at Chartres; that is to say, at the time of the opening of this story.

XVI.

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR RESUMES HIS INTERRUPTED NARRATIVE.

While making this long digression, which is in itself quite a history, we have left the Chevalier de la Graverie wet to the skin through Marianne's brutal interference in his discussion with his new acquaintance.

The chevalier mounted to his bed-chamber in a great rage. If he had met his housekeeper on the staircase he would doubtless have done her an injury; but he felt an icy chill piercing his flesh, and penetrating his very bones. He judged, then, that it would be imprudent to abandon himself to the violence of his resentment before taking some precaution against a cold.

A fire, bright and crackling, — one of those good wood-fires that are known only in the provinces, — at once dissipated the chevalier's chill and his resentment; he forgot his wrath while enjoying the soft, almost voluptuous, sensation of the reaction produced by the heat. Then, by a natural transition, he remembered the poor dog, who, not less maltreated than himself, had probably only the pale and powerless rays of an autumn sun by which to dry his silky coat.

This thought caused the Chevalier de la Graverie to abandon the easy-chair in which he was so keenly enjoying compensation for his icy douche; he went to the window, parted the curtains, and saw the dog sitting shivering on the other side of the street, beside the wall

of the prison that faced the house of Monsieur de la Graverie. The unhappy dog, with ears turned back, was regarding with a profoundly melancholy air the house where he had been so inhospitably greeted. At this moment, perhaps by chance, perhaps by instinct, he raised his head, and recognized the Chevalier de la Graverie through the window. Thereupon his physiognomy redoubled its expressiveness, and became charged with the most dolorous reproaches.

Monsieur de la Graverie's first impulse, the impulse which a great diplomat said he always distrusted if it was a good one, was to admit that he had wronged the noble animal; but the long-practised habit of combating his sympathies prevailed over this remnant of his early temperament.

"Nonsense!" he argued aloud, as if replying to his own thought, "let him go home to his master. Marianne would have been a hundred times right, if she had not made such a fraternal distribution between the dog and me. If I must entertain every vagabond of a dog, I should need a prince's fortune! Besides, that dog is full of faults; he is a gourmand, and consequently is likely to be a thief; he would pillage the house. And then, — and then, I don't wish any animals about my house; I have pledged myself against it, and, above all, I promised Dumesnil."

Thereupon the chevalier returned to his armchair, where he attempted to stifle the remorse revealed by his soliloquy, yielding, meanwhile, to a gentle drowsiness.

And then a strange thing took place in the consciousness of the poor chevalier. As he sank into a revery, the objects by which he was surrounded gradually faded away, giving place to others; the wall spread apart and became open-work panels, like a bird-cage; a soft air,

pure and perfumed, came in through all the openings; and through all the openings could be seen, looking upward, a clear sky, and toward the horizon an azure sea.

An involuntary illusion, a magnetic influence transported the Chevalier de la Graverie back to Papaete. He stood beside a couch; a yellow taper burned at its head and foot; upon it lay a human form, enveloped in a winding-sheet; gradually the winding-sheet became transparent, and through the linen the Chevalier de la Graverie recognized the pinched, yellow features, the fixed eyes, the half-open mouth of Captain Dumesnil, and he heard his friend's voice distinctly pronounce these words: —

"Unless I find metempsychosis the order of the day up there; in that case, I will implore the Almighty God to bestow on me the skin of a dog, in which, no matter where I shall be, I will break my chain to go and rejoin you."

Then a dark veil spread out between the chevalier and the captain's corpse, and the vision was lost in mist. The chevalier shrieked as if he were falling into an abyss, awakened, and on coming to himself found that he was clinging to the arms of his chair.

"*Sac-à-papier!*" cried he, wiping his brow, which was drenched with cold perspiration, "what a dreadful nightmare! Poor Dumesnil!"

Then, after a pause, during which his eyes were fixed staring at the spot where the vision had appeared, he exclaimed, —

"Surely, it was he!"

And as if that conviction had decided his final resolution, he rose and ran precipitately towards the window.

But he stopped midway. "Ah, it is too silly!" he murmured; "my poor friend is dead, and, unhappily, quite dead. The only thought I can entertain as a Christian is that I may hope God has indeed received him in mercy. No, it is absurd! I have walked too far to-day; Marianne's bath has given me a fever, and that cursed dog has muddled my brain. There! There! I'll think no more about that."

Monsieur de la Graverie turned to his bookcase; and in order to think no more about *that*, — that is, about Captain Dumesnil and the black dog, — he took the first book that came to hand, settled himself as squarely as possible in his easy-chair, braced his feet against the chimney-piece, opened the volume at hazard, and hit upon these lines: —

"Pythagoras left no written abstract of the system taught by him; but from the tradition handed down to us it can be affirmed that he believed in death only from the material point of view, and not at all from that of the vital principle. The vital principle received by man at birth, being immortal, can neither be worn out nor changed by man; but it passes into other beings,— beings of the same nature, if the gods think to reward a life of courage, devotion, and loyalty; beings of inferior nature, if the man in his passage through earth has committed a crime, or even a fault that he should expiate. Thus it was that he professed to have recognized, eight or ten years after that person's death, one of his friends, Cleomenes of Thasos, in the form of a dog — "

The chevalier read no further; he dropped the book which had responded so directly to his thought, and went cautiously to look from the window.

The dog was still at his post, still in the same attitude, his eyes still fixed on the very window from whose curtains he himself was looking; and when he saw the

chevalier reappear, his glance brightened, and he gently wagged his tail.

This persistence of the animal was so in keeping with the thoughts by which his mind was agitated that the Chevalier de la Graverie was obliged to appeal to his reason to avoid discerning a supernatural event in his encounter with the black dog. Ashamed of his superstitious inclinations, tormented by the strange sympathy which he suddenly felt for the companion of his promenade, he decided to adopt a middle course, which should indulge the weakness felt in his heart for a vagabond dog, yet without admitting into his house a troublesome guest.

The chevalier quickly descended to the kitchen. Marianne was absent. The chevalier breathed; he had heard the gate close, and had, in fact, hoped that she had gone out. He experienced a keen sense of joy at her absence.

In fact, when deciding upon this good deed, the chevalier had not been without apprehension of the sermon to which he must submit from his housekeeper on the sin he was about to commit in giving the blessings of the good God to a dog, when so many poor were in need,— which does not prove, pray observe, that, in application of this principle, Marianne gave the least alms in the world, with either her own or her master's bread. But the chevalier was resolved; he had, as they say, his head set. If Marianne said anything, he would profit by the grudge he owed her on account of the bucketful of water she had thrown upon his head, and tell her, with a dignity whose effect he had often recognized,—

"Marianne, we can live together no longer; make out your bill!"

Now as a result of that speech, when enunciated with

suitable impressiveness, Mademoiselle had always become as pliant as a glove. But for some time Marianne had been more crotchety than ever, and the chevalier had thought her superabundance of ill temper to be due to certain propositions made her by Monsieur the Mayor of Chartres that she should leave the chevalier's service and enter his. Under the circumstances, therefore, it was probable that if the chevalier were to hazard his majestic, "Marianne, make out your bill!" Marianne would present her bill and leave him.

The chevalier had indeed achieved the mastery over the sympathies of his heart, but not yet over the pleadings of his stomach. Marianne was not the most amiable, but the most skilful, cook that he had ever had. This was why he so feared to meet Marianne in the kitchen; this is why his heart was so light when he found that she was not there.

The chevalier, then, took advantage of the circumstance and advanced quickly to the buffet. The buffet was locked. Marianne was a careful maid. He then took a knife, and slipping it between the staple and the bolt he tried to pry the cupboard open without a key. But he reflected on what Marianne would say if she should reappear at that instant and surprise him in the very act of robbing his own buffet. His own, and yet was it his own? Did Marianne ever say, "Monsieur le Chevalier's kitchen"? Oh, no, indeed! Marianne said, "My kitchen."

The knife fell from Dieudonné's hand, and he looked around with an air of despair. Near the door, on a high shelf, beyond the reach of any prowling creature, he discovered a chicken, of which that morning he had eaten only one wing. Save for that wing, the chicken was intact.

The bird was a magnificent, fat, Mans pullet. Evidently, Marianne expected to make for the chevalier's dinner some excellent use of its remains, which were as appetizing as possible, white of meat, laden with fat, browned to a turn, and deliciously bathed in their own juices.

For a few seconds the chevalier's imagination savored the succulent remains of that pullet, in fricassee, in marinade, with bayonnaise or mayonnaise (the doctors disagree as to this point of culinary technology),— entremets somewhat vulgar, like all made-over dishes, but of which the chevalier was inordinately fond. And so his eyes began to search every corner and every shelf to see if some lucky chance would not reveal other eatables which might replace the pullet for his present purpose. But the chevalier sought in vain; he found nothing. He took the pullet by its legs, raised it to a level with his eyes, considered it with looks of regret and concupiscence, but stifled the desire to set his teeth into it.

The matter was still thus under consideration, and he might perhaps have yielded to temptation, when the street door, turning upon its rusty hinges, put an end to his hesitation. The chevalier emerged heroically from the combat between his heart and his stomach. He bravely enveloped the pullet in the folds of his dressing-gown, and mounted the kitchen stairs with a nimbleness and an agility he had not thought to find in his legs of forty-seven years.

On the way from the kitchen, he would have to encounter Marianne. He dashed into the pantry. He remained there, panting, until Marianne had descended into the kitchen in the basement, as they say to-day. He then escaped on tip-toe, holding his breath; he gained the stairway, mounted the steps two at a time,

re-entered his room, shut the door, shot the bolt, and fell upon a chair. His strength was exhausted.

Five minutes sufficed the chevalier for recovery; he regained his feet, went to the window, opened it resolutely, called to the dog, still crouched in the same place like a sphinx, and with superb aim tossed him the bird. The animal caught it on the wing, and instead of running off with his prey as the chevalier expected, and perhaps hoped, he took it between two paws, and, like a dog conscious of acting within his rights, began to dismember it on the spot with a vigor that reflected credit on his strength of jaw.

"Bravo, my lad!" enthusiastically cried the chevalier; "that is right! Well done! tear it to pieces! Good! that wing went down whole; good! one leg; good! the other; good! the head; now the carcass! Poor fellow! were you famished?"

And at the thought Monsieur de la Graverie heaved a great sigh; for the doctrine of metempsychosis recurred to him vividly, and with it the apparition of the poor captain. His eyes filled with tears at the thought that the friend who had been so good to him when in human form should suffer from hunger in another, whatever it might be, and especially in that of a dog who had broken his chain to come and find him.

We shall never know to what conclusion this idea might have led the chevalier had he had time to consider it, for he was violently torn away by cries of rage ascending from below. In his present frame of mind and conscious culpability, it was not difficult to recognize Marianne's voice. He hastily shut the window and ran to draw the bolt of his door.

It was, in truth, Marianne, who, having discovered the rape of her chicken, was wailing as if the house had

been reduced to ashes. The chevalier judged it better to meet the danger, or even to draw it upon himself. If, by chance, Marianne should go to the street-door and see the dog devouring the bird's carcass, his connivance would be manifest. If, on the other hand, he should engage her, if only for five minutes, all trace of the bird, all evidence, would have disappeared. The dog might remain licking his chops in expectation of another chicken; but he could not speak; and if he could he had quite too intelligent an air to confide to Marianne his gastronomic relations with the Chevalier de la Graverie. From his chamber door, and at the top of the staircase, that is to say, from a commanding standpoint, and in a masterful tone, he cried, —

"Well, Marianne, what is the matter? What is all this uproar about?"

"Uproar! And you ask that, monsieur!"

"Certainly, it is I who ask." Then, with increasing dignity, he added, "*Sac-à-papier!* I have a very good right, it seems to me, to know what is happening in *my house.*" And he emphasized pronoun and substantive very significantly.

Marianne felt the sting. "In your house!" said she, "in your house! oh, very well! here's a fine state of things!"

"What is the matter? Answer me!" he shamelessly demanded.

"The matter is that some one has robbed *your house,*" retorted Marianne.

The chevalier coughed, and with voice less firm, he continued: "And what has been stolen?"

"Your dinner has been stolen; that is all. Here it is four o'clock in the afternoon, and you can't expect me to go back to the market; besides, there would n't be

anything there. I might find a fowl, perhaps, but it would n't be fit to cook to-day. Everybody knows that a fowl has to be kept two days to be eatable."

The chevalier very much wished to bid her go to the pastry-cook's at the corner and get a *vol-au-vent*, or something of the sort, to take the place of the chicken. But the spaniel would certainly be still at the door, and the chevalier did not wish to expose him to Marianne's brutality. He contented himself with the response, —

"Pshaw! what of that? A bad dinner — it is soon over."

Such philosophy was so little in the chevalier's usual vein that Marianne, accustomed as she was to the most fastidious exactions on the part of her master, was quite stunned.

"Ah," grumbled she, "that's all you have to say. Very well! very well! it need n't trouble me, then."

And Marianne returned to the kitchen, humbled in pride, and plotting revenge.

For his part, the chevalier, quite as much on account of the chicken bestowed at the expense of his own dinner as of the battle he had just engaged in with his housekeeper, believed himself at quits with the spaniel. Without returning to the window, then, he ensconced himself in his easy-chair until Marianne opened his door and announced with a derisive air, —

"Monsieur is served."

This announcement was made regularly at five o'clock on every afternoon. The chevalier sallied forth and took his place at the table.

Marianne ceremoniously set before him a bit of boiled beef, a dish of peas *au sucre*, and a salad of French beans, duly notifying him that these three dishes constituted his entire dinner for that day.

With the utmost repugnance the poor chevalier attacked the beef, which was so stringy and guiltless of juice that he soon reached the beans. By good luck, his walk and the douche that he had received, and, more than all, the unaccustomed excitement which he had experienced, had probably sharpened his appetite, for though he made but one attack on the beef, he returned twice to the peas, and thrice to the beans; and he at last left the table, assuring the abashed Marianne that he had not dined so well for a long time.

After dinner the chevalier always went to his club. For nothing in the world would he have neglected a habit. What would happen if he did not have his little game of whist at two *liards* a counter? Yet he feared lest the chicken, instead of inducing the spaniel to go away, might have proved an inducement to stay, and that in going out he should meet him at the gate; and so he resolved to play him a trick. This was merely to go out by way of the garden instead of by the street.

The garden opened on a deserted alley, where no dog, however forlorn, however much a vagabond, would think of awaiting a master. And so it came to pass that by devious ways the chevalier gained his club in the Place de la Comédie without an unpleasant encounter. He stayed until ten o'clock.

"That devil of a spaniel is so obstinate," murmured the chevalier between his teeth, "that he is quite capable of being still at his post; so I will go back the way I came."

And the chevalier returned by round-about streets through the little alley and re-entered at the small garden-gate, hastening his steps as the lightning flashed and he heard the distant rumbling of thunder. Just as he was crossing the garden, down plashed the first drops, as large

as six-franc pieces. On the staircase he met Marianne, who, fearing that she had perhaps carried her revenge too far, assumed her most amiable air and remarked, —

"Monsieur has done well to return."

"And why so?" asked Dieudonné.

"Why so? Because there is going to be a storm, and such a storm that one would not like to put a dog out of doors."

"Hm!" ejaculated the chevalier, "hm! hm!" And, passing Marianne, he entered his room. He longed to go to the window to see if the dog was still sitting in front of the house, but he dared not. Like all weak natures, he preferred uncertainty to being called upon to make a decision.

The rain whipped sharply against the window shutters, and each peal of thunder sounded nearer than the last. The chevalier quickly undressed, made his night-toilet in a twinkling, sprang into bed, blew out his candles, and drew the bedcovers over his ears. But still the storm was so violent that in spite of his precautions he heard the rain lashing his shutters and the thunder rumbling overhead; for the storm had steadily advanced, and now seemed to have concentrated its force over his roof.

Suddenly, out of the midst of the tempest, above the roar of the thunder, arose a wail, prolonged, sepulchral, lugubrious, rising ever higher and higher, like nothing but the howling of a dog.

The chevalier felt a chill creeping through every fibre of his being. Was the spaniel of the morning still there? Or was this another dog, a chance passer-by? The howl he had just heard had so little in common with the joyous barking of the morning, that the chevalier could easily suppose no homogeneity to exist between that barking and this howling, and that they could not have emanated

from the same throat. The chevalier pulled the clothes higher, and crept farther down into the depths of his bed.

The storm continued to rage more terribly than ever. The wind shook the house as if trying to lift it from its foundations.

A second time that long, wailing, uncanny howl was heard.

This time the chevalier was unable to resist; the howl seemed to draw him by main force from his bed. He arose, then, and although curtains, windows, and blinds were closed, the room was illuminated by the uninterrupted succession of lightning-flashes. As if impelled by a force more powerful than himself, he advanced stumblingly towards the window; arrived there, he lifted the curtain, and between the slats of the blind he saw the unhappy spaniel sitting in the same place, beneath torrents of rain that might have dissolved a dog of granite.

The chevalier was seized with profound pity. It seemed to him, too, as if there were something supernatural in such pertinacity in a dog seen that day for the first time. Mechanically he placed his hand on the casement fastenings to open it, but at the same instant a burst of thunder, louder than any he had yet heard, broke just above his head, the darkness was rent asunder, a fiery serpent writhed in the air, the dog uttered a great cry of terror and fled howling; while, struck by an electric shock that passed into his body through the hand that had touched the iron fastenings, the chevalier, recoiling, fell backward at the foot of his bed in a state of unconsciousness.

XVII.

HALLUCINATION.

When the chevalier came to himself, the storm had passed away, the night was dark, and the silence complete. For some time he knew not what had taken place; he could neither understand nor remember how he came to be lying there at the foot of his bed, in his night-shirt, on that autumn night already as cold as winter. He felt benumbed; there was a roaring in his ears like the distant rumbling of a waterfall. He raised himself to his knees, and groping about found his bed at arm's-length, took a deep breath, and by a superhuman effort succeeded in mounting his pyramid of mattresses. There he found the clothes still warm,— which proved that his unconsciousness had not lasted long,— and the eider-down coverlet half dragged off. He slipped between the bed-clothes with a feeling of indescribable voluptuousness, drew up his eider-down squarely, curled up to get warm the more quickly, and tried to go to sleep.

But, on the contrary, memory returned step by step, and at the same pace sleep retreated. The chevalier recalled everything in detail, from the Mans pullet to the clap of thunder. He then listened to hear whether the silence of the night would again be broken by the dog's howls. All was still. After all, had he not seen the frightened dog in flight, at the very moment when he had received the electric shock which still benumbed his arm? So he was well rid of that animal, as lean as a

ghost. But was not the dog in some mysterious way linked with the only memories dear to him,— with the death of his friend Dumesnil?

All this was very agitating to the chevalier, whose life for eight or nine years had flowed as smoothly as the unrippled surface of a lake, but which, since the preceding day, seemed to have changed to a tumultuous torrent, setting toward some dreadful brink like that of the Rhine or of the Niagara.

Just then the clock struck one. It might be either some half-hour or one o'clock in the morning. The chevalier wished to get up, strike a light, and look; but, as timid as a frightened child, everything seemed to him so deranged from its natural order that he dared not rise. He waited. Half an hour later, the clock again struck one. So it was one o'clock in the morning. The chevalier still had six hours to wait for the daybreak. He shivered, and felt the cold perspiration of terror oozing from every pore; most certainly if sleep did not come to him, he would be mad before day. He set his teeth and clenched his fists, and in his rage commanded himself to go to sleep. Unhappily, we know that one has no control over himself under such circumstances. In vain the chevalier bade himself, "Go to sleep;" he did not sleep. But, in default of sleep, came delirium, that madman's-dream.

The chevalier fell into a sort of stupor resembling sleep; and it then seemed to him that he, and not Dumesnil, was lying on the bed swathed in a winding-sheet. But there was an error; his lethargy was mistaken for death, and he was about to be buried alive. Then came the undertaker, who raised him, mute and motionless, from his bed, placed him enshrouded in grave-clothes within his coffin, put on the lid, and began to nail it down; but

one of the nails piercing his flesh, the chevalier uttered a shriek and awoke.

Awake, or thinking himself so, — for he was still a prey to delirium, — the chevalier thought himself suddenly transported to a fantastic world inhabited by creatures bizarre in form that regarded him with menacing eyes. He attempted to fly, but at every step, as before the knight in the garden of Armida, arose new monsters, — dragons, hippogriffs, chimeras, — who all joined in a pack to give him chase. Then the miserable chevalier stumbled, fell, regained his feet, and renewed his flight; but being soon overtaken he awaited death like a stag at bay, without strength to struggle against it; yet at the first tearing of his flesh he was awakened by the pain it caused him; and again did he assure himself: "It is not real. I am in my bed; there is nothing to fear. I am dreaming; it is a vision, a nightmare."

Then the chevalier aroused himself and sat up in bed, hiding his face in his hands. In vain he told himself he would not be such a fool as to pay the least attention to a dream; the repetition of these shocks, the prostration from want of sleep, began to affect his brain. And even in that position he could not resist the terrible stupor by whose aid the fantastic took possession of his life, and mastered all his faculties. One hand fell from his face and hung over the side of his bed; but scarcely had it fallen before it seemed to feel the soft, warm caress of a dog's tongue; then the tongue gradually grew cold, and became harsh and as rigid as an icicle.

The chevalier opened, or thought that he opened, his eyes. At the moment, he was so little the agent of his own free will that it was impossible for him to say, "That was a dream and this is reality," and he shuddered from head to foot as he saw the spaniel sitting near

his bed, its silky hair glowing in the darkness with a sort of phosphorescent light that illumined the entire room, so that he could distinguish the animal's eyes fixed upon him with looks of sad and tender reproach, ceasing to be those of a dog and assuming a human expression. And that expression was the very one which the dying eyes of Dumesnil had turned upon his own.

The chevalier could no longer restrain himself; he leaped from his bed, and stumbling over the furniture in the darkness, made his way to the mantel, where he found matches with which he lighted a candle. The candle lighted, in dire trepidation the chevalier, who had shut his eyes when leaping from the bed, ventured at last to open them and look around him. The room had no other occupant. He turned to the window and raised the curtain; the street was deserted.

The chevalier dropped upon a chair, wiped the perspiration from his face, and, becoming chilled again, he went to bed, but this time leaving his candle burning. The light undoubtedly chased away the phantoms, for the chevalier saw them no more, although he was preyed upon by such a high fever that he could hear the throbbing of the arteries of his temples.

At the first ray of daylight, the chevalier rang for Marianne to come and light his fire. But not being accustomed to enter her master's room before eight o'clock, Marianne paid no attention to the unseasonable ringing. Perhaps she thought it occasioned by some goblin, hostile to her repose. The chevalier arose, opened his door, and called. Marianne remained as deaf to his voice as to the bell. Consequently, the chevalier, putting on his trousers and his dressing-gown, resigned himself to performing that household task.

His fire lighted, after reassuring himself that the dog

had indeed disappeared, the chevalier rang again. This time, as it was Marianne's usual hour, she entered with all the materials necessary for building a fire.

The fire was burning, and the chevalier was warming himself. Marianne stood rooted to the threshold.

"My breakfast!" ordered the chevalier.

Marianne recoiled a step. Never had the chevalier risen before nine o'clock, or ordered his breakfast before ten.

It was half-past eight; the chevalier had risen, was warming himself, and calling for his breakfast. More than that, the chevalier was pale.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" said Marianne, "what has happened to monsieur?"

The chevalier would gladly have told her had he dared, but he did not dare. "Merciful heavens!" he exclaimed, evading the question, "A person might die here for all the help he could get. I have rung and called and shouted, but there might as well have been no one in the house."

"Well, monsieur, when a poor woman like me has worked all day far beyond her strength she is not sorry to sleep a little at night."

"You did not work yesterday beyond your strength," retorted the chevalier with some acrimony; "but it is not necessary to speak of that; I have asked for my breakfast."

"Breakfast at this hour! Lord! is it time for it?"

"It is, after my bad dinner last night."

"You must wait till I can go to the market; there is absolutely nothing in the house."

"Very well, go to the market, then; but don't be gone longer than is necessary."

Marianne decided to risk a few questions.

"*Sac-à-papier!*" shouted the chevalier, striking at the fire that he himself had made, and sending out a shower of sparks.

Marianne had only twice heard this innocent formula; she was instantly subjugated. She wheeled about, shut the door, went down the stairs, and set out at a trot in the direction of the market. Marianne bent her head after the manner of a constitutional monarch who accepts a reform imposed by his parliament, but accepts only with the settled resolve to take a speedy revenge.

Quite contrary to his usual custom, the chevalier ate hastily, and made none of the traditional reflections inspired by the remembrance of the excellent coffee that he had enjoyed when on his travels, and to which that he used at Chartres — although Chartres was the city in all France that prided herself on being able to brown coffee — was no more to be compared than was pure chiccory to ordinary coffee. Things had come to such a pass in the establishment of this old bachelor that Marianne could believe neither eyes nor ears.

The carrier brought the paper. Prompted by conciliatory motives, Marianne hastened to take it to her master. But the latter, instead of conscientiously beginning at the motto and reading to the printer's signature, as he had done during all these years, merely threw a *distrait* glance over the sheet, flung it down on the round-table, and returned to his chamber.

"Really," communed Marianne with herself, while clearing away her dishes, "I do not recognize monsieur. To-day he does nothing like himself; he did not notice that the fish-roe was like paste, or that the cutlets were like cinders, or that his beans were scorched."

Then, throwing up her hands under the impulse of a sudden thought, "Can he be in love?" she cried.

After a moment's reflection, however, she laughed at such a nonsensical idea. "Oh, no, no! that is impossible; yet what the devil can he be at in his room? I must see!"

And, discreet servant that she was, Marianne, walking on tiptoe, crossed the salon and proceeded to screw her eye into the keyhole of the bedroom door. She saw her master standing, in spite of the stinging cold of an autumn morning, at the open window and attentively watching the street.

"He certainly seems to be expecting some one to go by," said Marianne. "Good Lord! that is all that is wanting,—a woman in the house! I could sooner forgive him that dog of yesterday."

But the Chevalier de la Graverie, probably not finding in the street what he was looking for, closed his window; and while Marianne, more perplexed than ever, regained the dining-room, he began to stalk up and down the length and breadth of his room, with folded arms and eyebrows lifted, and under the visible dominion of great preoccupation. All at once he threw off his dressing-gown like a man who has taken a sudden resolution, and drew on one sleeve of his coat. But while proceeding with this detail of his toilet he cast a glance toward the clock. The clock indicated that it was half-past ten. He then walked about a while, his coat hanging by one sleeve.

Had Marianne seen her master thus, she would not have stopped at the hypothesis that he was in love. She would have said, "The chevalier is mad!"

It would have been still worse had Marianne seen him leave his room in this state, and, one sleeve on, the other hanging, descend into the garden. It was only when out in the open air that he recovered from his abstraction, and drew on the other sleeve.

What was the chevalier about in the garden? Marianne would not have understood this any better than she did the rest. The chevalier searched about, came and went, halted by preference at the corners, measured off squares with his cane, sometimes one metre, sometimes two, according to the space. Then he muttered: "Here? — no. There? — it will do there, perfectly. To-day I will look for a mason. A kennel of brick or stone would be too damp; I think a board kennel will be better. I will not look for a mason; I will get a carpenter."

It was evident that the chevalier was there in the body, but that his mind was elsewhere. But where was his mind? The solution of this problem, so obscure for Marianne, could not possibly be clearer, let us hope, for the reader. He knows very well what resolution the chevalier had formed. He had determined to adopt that dog, and was looking for a place where he could be housed in the most agreeable manner possible.

The self-denial practised by the chevalier in sacrificing his pullet had allayed his remorse with regard to Marianne's ill-treatment; but it no longer sufficed after the unhappy dreams and hallucinations which had overtaken him in the very act of ingratitude toward an animal that had exhibited every mark of friendship for him. Not that with the return of day the chevalier suffered the same degree of anguish: no, he did not credit the dreams of night when pierced by the light of day; metempsychosis was a system that had no existence save in the doctrines of Pythagoras; reason and his religious faith equally condemned that belief. But, after all, in spite of the cold calculations of reason, in spite of the awakening of conscience, he hesitated; and to minds of such temper as the chevalier's hesitation is fatal. True, he

would have sworn it to be absurd to suppose that the spirit animating the body of a black dog could have had the slightest connection with the soul of his poor friend, gone to the unknown world; yet, and in spite of his energetic denunciations, he felt for the dog an interest so profound, and so tender, that he was dismayed at his inability to cast it off. He thought of the poor brute exposed during twelve hours to all the inclemency of the season, shivering in the blast, drenched by the torrents of rain falling from heaven, blinded by lightning, encompassed by thunder, fleeing in affright through the darkness, and with the coming of day, fallen a victim to the brutality of children, seeking his breakfast in the gutters; in short, undergoing all the misfortunes of vagabondage, this proletary among dogs, — misfortunes the least of which was to be killed in his tracks, as if truly and duly convicted of being mad.

Briefly, Monsieur de la Graverie, who on the evening before would have given all the dogs in the world for a zest of lemon, especially if it were needed to impart a flavor to a cream, — Monsieur de la Graverie, feeling his heart swell and his eyes fill with tears when he thought of the misfortunes of the poor spaniel, had resolved to put an end to those misfortunes by adopting him; and, as we have seen, he was seeking and measuring a spot where the quarters of his future guest should be built.

Before reaching this point, there had been a great struggle, and the chevalier had not been vanquished without a battle. Again and again, even, he had risen and renewed the contest. But the greater his wrath against his weakness, and the stronger his resistance to his imagination, the more rebellious became his imagination, and the more completely his weakness overcame

him. Finally, while succeeding in expelling from his brain the supernatural ideas connecting the dog with the memory of poor Dumesnil, the dog interested him none the less; he no longer thought of him save as one of the brute creation, yet he thought only of him. Ah! that dog was not like all dogs; from the little he had seen, short as the time had been in which the chevalier had observed him, he was convinced that the spaniel must possess a mass of qualities superior and special, which, upon reflection, he remembered to have read in the animal's honest countenance.

In vain did the chevalier, systematic egotist as he was, intrench himself behind past resolutions; in vain he recalled his vows; in vain he declared that he had sworn not to open his heart to any creature on earth, whether biped, quadruped, or winged; in vain he represented the thousand discomforts that must incontestably attend the affection which he had felt rising within him for the beast. How it ended has been seen. He intended to lodge the dog in none of the existing sheds, stables, or outbuildings. He had just chosen a spot, the best, pray understand, where he would build a kennel, in which the spaniel should enjoy every comfort.

And, by way of justification, Monsieur de la Graverie had assured himself, "After all, it is only a dog." Then, wagging his head, he had added: "I am neither old enough nor young enough, having renounced my kind, to bestow a scrap of affection on any animal whatever." And, extending his hand toward the spot where he had decided to build the spaniel's kennel, he continued: "Let me once accomplish what I think I owe him, he may lose himself, or he may die, without my caring in the least. I shall be free,— if a dog has become necessary to me, which I deny,— I shall be free to give him a successor.

Come, now! is it proving false to my vows to seek a little distraction for the monotony of my existence? In resigning myself to a state of isolation I did not intend to condemn myself to a servitude a hundred times worse than that of the galley. No! *sac-à-papier!* a hundred times, No!"

And, with this adjuration, indicative of extreme exasperation, the Chevalier de la Graverie drew himself erect, as if to challenge any one to express a contrary opinion. Not a breath was heard. Thereupon, the chevalier regarded the matter as fully settled.

Yet, in order to put his project into execution, the principal factor was lacking, — the dog, who, scared by a clap of thunder, had fled howling. The chevalier resolved to go out as usual. He would certainly not trouble himself to search for the spaniel, but if they met he should be well received.

Such was the honest intention of the Chevalier de la Graverie when the great gong of the cathedral sounded noon.

Although Monsieur de la Graverie never set out before one o'clock, he resolved, considering the gravity of the occasion to hasten his promenade by an hour. He went up to his room, took his hat, — we have seen that he had his cane, as with it he had measured the site of the dog-house, — stuffed his pocket with bits of sugar, adding a tablet of chocolate in case the sugar should prove insufficient, and started off, not exactly to seek the dog, but with the hope that chance might direct that their paths should cross.

The chevalier traversed the Place des Épars, gained St. Michael's Mount, and sat down upon a bench opposite the barracks.

It goes without saying that Marianne observed his

departure with constantly increasing astonishment. It was the first time in the five years of her service with the chevalier that he had gone out before one o'clock. Besides, it was not the hour for grooming the horses; the barracks would be quiet, the yards deserted, save for the crossing at long intervals of a trooper on duty.

For that matter, in our chevalier's unwonted state of mind, the cause of his preoccupation was not to be found there. He gazed neither at the yard nor at the buildings of the barracks, but on all sides of him, while continuing mentally his discussions with himself. And from time to time, when the desire to become the proprietor of the beautiful and graceful spaniel surmounted in his mind the series of inconveniences attached to the possession of a dog, he would rise and mount his bench and gaze around. Finally, as in spite of his elevation the horizon was limited, he ended by compromising with his desires, and went to search beyond the line of trees on the promenade.

Monsieur de la Graverie passed four long hours on that bench; and he looked in vain, for, like Sister Anne, he saw nothing come. The faster the time flew by, the more he feared the dog would not reappear. Doubtless it had been an accident and not a daily custom that had led the dog to the place; the chevalier, who came every day, had never seen him before.

After these four hours of waiting, the chevalier was so well disposed toward taking him away if he should reappear, that, in case the animal should be unwilling to follow as on the evening before, he had prepared and twisted his handkerchief into a rope, to tie around his neck.

It was useless; the chevalier heard five o'clock strike without having seen the spaniel, nor even any animal

that he could have the momentary comfort of mistaking for him. He resolved to give himself a half-hour's grace at the risk of whatever Marianne, accustomed to seeing him return every day at exactly four o'clock, might think and say.

At half-past five, the promenade was entirely deserted. The disappointed chevalier then thought for the first time about the dinner which had awaited him since five o'clock, — cold, if it had waited on the table; burned, if it had waited on the fire. In a very bad humor, he set out on his way home.

At the end of the street the chevalier saw Marianne standing in the doorway.

Marianne was prepared to avenge herself and humble her master's importance, as she had promised two or three of her neighbors. But, just as she was about to open her mouth, —

"What are you doing here?" harshly demanded the chevalier.

"You can see, indeed, monsieur," answered the stupefied Marianne; "I am waiting for you."

"A cook's place is not at the street-door," sententiously returned the chevalier, "but in the kitchen beside her range."

Then, scenting the odor that came from her laboratory, as say the chemists and the *cordons bleus*, he added, —

"Take care! don't serve me a burnt dinner; your breakfast this morning was not fit for the devil."

"Ah! ah!" ejaculated Marianne in abject retreat toward her kitchen, "it seems that I was deceived, and that he did notice. Decidedly, he is not in love. But if he is not in love, then what is the matter?"

XVIII.

IN WHICH MARIANNE ARRIVES AT A CONCLUSION.

The chevalier entered, ate hastily, found fault with everything, browbeat Marianne, did not go out in the evening, and spent almost as bad a night as the previous one.

The morning sun found Monsieur de la Graverie almost ill from the fatigue of this second night; the tortures of his imagination had wrought such a spell that the somewhat vague desire of the day before to become the owner of the spaniel was changed to a fixed determination to recover and possess him, cost what it might.

Like William of Normandy, Monsieur de la Graverie burned his ships. He sent for a carpenter, and, in Marianne's presence, undismayed by her uplifted hands and her exclamations, he ordered a splendid habitation for his future guest; then he went away under pretext of purchasing a collar and chain, but in reality to take advantage of any chance that might bring him the much desired dog.

This time Monsieur de la Graverie did not limit himself to a state of expectancy, as he had done on the day before; scorning what might be said of it, he visited the intelligence offices, inserted advertisements in the two journals of Chartres, and put up notices at all the street corners. All was useless; the dog had come and gone like a meteor; no one could give even the least information concerning him.

In a few days Monsieur de la Graverie had grown as thin as a lath and as yellow as a quince. He either no longer ate, or, if he ate, he achieved only a mechanical function, taking ortolans for larks, and going so far as to confound a dish of soft carp's-roe with a blanc mange. He either did not sleep, or, the instant he fell asleep, he could see the spaniel's eyes glowing like carbuncles from a corner of the room. He then experienced an emotion of joy; his dog was found; he called him; the dog came creeping toward him without once taking his eyes from those of the chevalier, who, in helpless fascination, breathing heavily, lay inert on the bed, his arms hanging; the dog began to lick his hands with a tongue like ice, then he gradually climbed upon the bed, and ended by sitting, with lolling tongue as red as blood and flaming eyes, on the chevalier's chest. And this nightmare of a few seconds was an eternity of suffering for the unhappy man. Monsieur de la Graverie would awake more bruised and drenched with perspiration than the unfortunate Dufavel when drawn from his well.

You will readily understand that these changes in the chevalier's physical aspect had their moral counterpart. At times he became as morose as a Mohammedan fakir absorbed in the contemplation of his navel; sometimes he was as irascible and unreasonable as a gouty patient, and Marianne declared to everybody that the story of the dog was only a pretence, that her master was tormented by some love affair, and that the place was no longer endurable even for her, sweet-tempered as everybody knew her to be.

As a pretext for the kennel which the carpenter had built, and the collar and chain that he had bought, the chevalier announced that he was going to buy a dog.

This declaration served as an advertisement to all who

had dogs for sale. Dogs were brought to him by the score, from the cur of Constantinople to the great St. Bernard.

But, it is needless to say, the chevalier could not make a choice. No! the dog of his heart was a spaniel with long, glossy hair, with a white jabot, a flame-colored muzzle, — a spaniel with soft eyes and sad, with a voice almost human. He had a reason for rejecting one after another of the poor animals presented to him. If it was a pug-dog, he wished his mate, he said, to perpetuate the breed, and the female was naturally not to be found; if it was a bull-dog, he was too much like a *gendarme* of Chartres, and he was afraid of getting into trouble; one was too cross, another too dirty. He objected to the stupid faces of the harriers, hound, bitch, and puppy. He pretended that the braches ran after everybody; and, after having exhausted the contingent of salable dogs in the arondissement, the Chevalier de la Graverie, more and more struck by the supernatural qualities of the black spaniel, was astonished at the prodigious difference that can exist between a dog and a dog.

For ten days these exciting events had usurped the calm that had reigned during so many long years in the house in the Rue des Lices.

It was now Sunday. A resplendent sun warmed the atmosphere; his rays, traversing unhindered the branches of the trees shorn of their foliage, concentrated their heat on the knolls sheltered by the old walls, and the entire population of Chartres had appointed a rendezvous on the promenade to enjoy a last time the soft temperature.

Citizens' wives on their husbands' arms proceeded solemnly to the weekly exhibition of their silk gowns; gay chatterings, boisterous shouts of laughter, issued from caps of grisettes beribboned with streamers of

liveliest hues; rustic maidens from the suburbs, short of stature, with their plaited coiffures, their red or yellow kerchiefs, all more bewildered than joyous, passed in ranks like grenadiers, monopolizing the promenade for a time. The soldiers, with forms erect, carrying their sabres under the left arm, mingled with this multi-colored throng with smiles which they strove to render fascinating; while the old bourgeois, disdaining such futile vanities, contented themselves with enjoying, like epicures, this last fine day the Lord was granting them.

The Chevalier de la Graverie had taken his place in the midst of this pleasure-seeking throng. He had come there as much from need of occupation as from habit; for, ever haunted by his vision, half mad with despair and insomnia, discouraged by the small success of his researches, he had, although not resigned, lost all hope of again finding the mysterious spaniel. He was no longer the placid, self-satisfied loiterer encountered in the first chapter of this story; like all who are tortured by a hidden malady, he was sadder and more morose in direct ratio to the general merriment. The gayety appeared to him like an insult to his own feelings; the very sun seemed to have chosen ill his day for shining; the crowd irritated him; he elbowed his way right and left in a way that said, "Go home, good people! you are in my way!"

Suddenly, as our chevalier, feeling his bad humor increasing, was asking himself if he would not be wiser to take the counsel he was giving others, and go to his own home, he uttered a cry that attracted the attention of all around him.

The chevalier was pale, his eyes were staring, his arms outstretched. A hundred paces ahead of him in the crowd, he had just caught a glimpse of a black dog that resembled his spaniel, hair for hair.

The chevalier tried to hasten his pace to overtake him; but the mob was at the moment such a jam that it was not an easy plan to execute. With wrathful eyes the beautiful dames regarded this good man who deranged the symmetry of their toilets; the grisettes did not spare their jibes; and some officers whom he had jostled stopped to say in a provoking tone, —

"Ha, there! my good man, mind what you are about!"

But complaints, raillery, threats, not the least in the world checked the chevalier, who continued to plough his course, like a ship that leaves behind it a wake of angry foam.

Unhappily, if on his part he quickened his pace, the animal that he pursued, worrying his way among the masculine legs, brushing aside the skirts of ladies and grisettes, hastened also, and in the steeple-chase the odds threatened to be against the chevalier; but, by darting into a counter-alley of the ramparts and running a few paces, he came out neck-and-neck with the quadruped.

It was indeed the spaniel which had so strongly impressed the Chevalier de la Graverie; it was he, with the long, silky ears so coquettishly enframing his face, — he, with his coat black and lustrous, and his tail like a plume. There was the less doubt of it, in that, turning, as if drawn by a magnetic influence emanating from Monsieur de la Graverie, he recognized the chevalier, ran toward him, and lavished the most expressive caresses upon him.

But at that moment a young girl, to whom the chevalier had not paid the slightest attention, turned around and gave the single call, —

"Black!"

The animal bounded away with great leaps and overtook the girl, giving no heed to the chevalier, who in turn shouted himself hoarse with, "Black! Black! Black!"

The chevalier halted, and furiously stamped his feet. It seemed as if, inoffensive as he was, a ferment of hatred and jealousy had entered his heart toward the young girl who had cut short the single moment of satisfaction that he had enjoyed in fifteen days. Yet in the midst of his disappointment he experienced a keen sense of joy. He had proof of the animal's existence; it was not, like Faust's water-spaniel, a fantastic creature. What was more, he knew its name: it was called BLACK.

The chevalier experienced the sensation felt by the young lover when he first hears pronounced the name of her whom he loves; and after having shouted it aloud, as we have seen, without success, he repeated many times, —

"Black! my dear Black! my little Black!"

But that was not all. It may readily be supposed that Monsieur de la Graverie, who had received almost the entire canine race in order to discover his phœnix, would not thus let escape the chance to become its owner; he had quite resolved to seduce Black's young mistress, not by the employment of his personal charms, but by the magnitude of the price he would offer for it.

However, this fine resolution broke down through fear of what people would think. The Chevalier de la Graverie, possessing the character we so well know, above all things feared ridicule. He could not, then, determine to undertake to bargain in the open street; he thought it would be wiser to follow the young girl to her lodgings, and there, far from the ears and eyes of the curious, enter upon the important negotiation.

Unhappily, the poor chevalier, who in all his life had never practised the arts of the seducer, was completely ignorant as to the little manœuvres that would enable him to follow a woman without taking the public into

his confidence. Desiring to approach the object of his attentions, he found nothing more natural than to run until he was not more than ten steps distant; arrived at that point, he slowed up his gait to match hers whenever the crowd obliged her to slacken her pace. At sight of this methodical ruling of one's step upon that of another, and observing the age of the young girl whom the chevalier was following, it requires no great effort of the imagination to comprehend that the orderly groups of Chartrains who were taking a turn about the city imputed to the chevalier improper intentions which were very far from his thought, and that in every group one heard phrases of this sort: —

"Did you see that old reprobate, De la Graverie, running after a girl in broad daylight? Such shameless indecorum!"

"Eh! eh! the little one is pretty!"

Of which the chevalier was utterly ignorant.

"My dear," said the lady who had begun this conversation. "I have always had a bad opinion of a man that spends his fortune in gourmandizing."

"It will be very difficult to receive him after such a scandal, you know. But, do look! his eyes are starting from his head. Well! he is petting the dog to get at the girl."

Without a suspicion of the indignation excited by his conduct, the chevalier had continued to follow the dog.

As for the dog's mistress, to whom, as we have said, the chevalier gave no heed, she was a young girl sixteen or seventeen years of age, slender and frail, but of remarkable beauty. She had the complexion of the dead whiteness that constitutes the pallor of brunettes, black eyes whose long lashes imparted an expression of melancholy, and eyebrows equally black and delicately arched;

and, in strange contrast with that marvellous ivory tint, she had ashen blond hair, whose thick locks puffed out from a little straw bonnet. As to her dress, it was more than simple; her little merino gown, although neat, had not the lustre that usually distinguishes the Sunday dress among the class to which she evidently belonged. It could be seen that this modest toilet was obliged to share the labors of its proprietor, and it might therefore be presumed to compose her entire wardrobe.

At length, like every one else, the young girl remarked the persistence with which the elderly gentleman was following her steps. She walked faster, hoping to get rid of him; but when she reached one of the barriers that protect from horses and carriages the entrance to the promenades reserved for pedestrians, being forced to wait for those in advance of her to pass through, she found herself side by side with the chevalier, who profited by the circumstance, not to form her acquaintance, but to renew his acquaintance with the spaniel. For the second time, the young girl called her dog; then, thinking like the others that the dog was but a pretext seized upon by the chevalier for the purpose of approaching her, she drew a little leash from her pocket, passed it through the spaniel's collar, and resumed her course without casting a glance behind.

But, however occupied with the actions of the quadruped he had been, Monsieur de la Graverie had not been able, yet without the least thought of wrong, to withhold a glance at the mistress as she accomplished the little manœuvre we have described. He uttered a cry of astonishment and stood rooted to the spot.

The young girl bore a strange likeness to Madame de la Graverie.

During the pause enforced by his amazement, the

child had gained some thirty paces. Her resemblance to Mathilde supplied the chevalier with a fresh motive for following the owner of the dog; he again renewed the pursuit at a little trot. But fear lent the swifter wings to the young girl, because she had now left the promenade for a side street; so that although the chevalier sweat blood and water, each moment lost him ground.

If the chevalier had not to do with Atalanta herself, he had certainly encountered her sister.

They had reached that part of the town called Petits-Prés, a spot almost deserted; there, perceiving that in spite of his efforts the girl was at every step increasing the distance between them, the chevalier changed his tactics, and, with the most blandishing accents, called,—

"Mademoiselle, mademoiselle! stop, I pray you! I am really quite exhausted."

But the child took good care not to yield to the prayer of one whom she regarded as a persecutor, and, instead of stopping, she pressed on.

The chevalier, believing that she had not heard him, then put his two hands up to his mouth to make a trumpet, and drew a deep breath in order to substitute a base voice for the tenor that he had employed in the first appeal, when he was stopped short by the smile of raillery visible on many faces.

The chevalier renewed the pursuit; but, this time, he did not trot,— he ran. But the faster he ran, the faster ran the young girl, and, consequently, he saw the distance between them increasing; soon he saw her only at intervals, and he would have lost all sight of her but for two points which constantly held his eyes,— the ribbons of Scotch plaid on her straw hat, and Black, who formed a dark spot in the perspective.

Upon reaching the Porte Guillaume, Monsieur de la

Graverie saw nothing at all. He halted. Had she gained the faubourg? Had she gone back into the town? These were questions which held the chevalier in suspense. After a few seconds of hesitation, during which he had favored the faubourg, he decided for the town, and passed beneath the sombre arches of the old gate; but after he had cleared the gate his hesitation was renewed.

There were two streets, one to the right, and one to the left, and the poor chevalier lost time again in debating the chances as to whether the girl had taken the one or the other; and as these embarrassing alternatives presented themselves every ten minutes, by the time night had fallen, Monsieur de la Graverie was still walking the pavements of the good town of Chartres without having regained any trace of what he sought.

The chevalier was so harassed and discouraged that, even at the risk of what Marianne would think, he could not decide to return home. Consequently, he entered the first café he came across, sat down at a table, and ordered bouillon.

The poor chevalier, who often superintended the preparation of his *pot-au-feu* when he found Marianne's zeal somewhat cool, must have been little acquainted with the practices and customs of such establishments to have ordered bouillon in such a place. Hence, scarcely had he touched his lips to what had been presented when he let escape an exclamation of disgust; and, dropping his spoon, he began to nibble at the roll which had been served with the dreadful brew, and which, happily, he had not been moved to crumble into it.

While engaged with his roll, the chevalier began to look around him. He had chanced upon a café frequented by officers of the garrison; to one paletot or redingote could be seen ten uniforms. Military caps,

helmets, sabres, and swords hanging on the wall, lent a sufficiently picturesque aspect to the scene; under every table stretched madder-colored trousers; every tabouret was brilliant with coats and jackets braided with red. Some gentlemen were learning strategy in manœuvring double sixes, others were surrendering themselves to the delights of various ingurgitations; some were sleeping openly, others were dozing over their coffee or absinthe, while trying to look as if meditating.

Right and left blended the interesting conversations that beguile the leisure allotted to the sons of Mars. Here promotion, that inexhaustible theme of those ambitious for epaulets, furnished ample matter for backbiting. There, the cut of a *sabretache*, shield-shaped, heart-shaped, or square, and the superiority of the old boot over the new, were under discussion. Recipes for boot-polish were exchanged in one group, while farther away leisure was provided for the editors of the "Military Journal" by an inquiry, with much debate, argument, and comment, into the transfers of different comrades they had known. These edifying harangues were delivered with resonant voices; not a word was lost to the gallery; the result was that the *pékins* desirous of instruction could derive great profit from them.

The sign of this coffee-house was, "The Sun shines for all."

Two sub-lieutenants alone had placed some restraint upon their conversation.

XIX.

THE TWO SUB-LIEUTENANTS.

These two sub-lieutenants were the nearest neighbors of Monsieur de la Graverie, who, notwithstanding their precaution, found himself, almost in spite of himself, a third party to their confidences.

One of the two men might have been twenty-four or twenty-six years of age; his head was covered with fiery red hair, and, in spite of this temerity of color, he possessed a physiognomy that lacked neither a certain distinction nor a definite charm.

The second was one whom all would have agreed to call a handsome soldier. He was five feet six, broad-shouldered, and so slender of figure that the envious — and such charms always encounter them — asserted that his remarkable slenderness could be due only to artificial contrivances borrowed from the fair sex. Such a waist served admirably to throw into relief the chest development and the curving hips, augmented still more by the amplitude of the trousers, that one might have supposed to be lined with crinoline, if crinoline had then been invented. This physical superiority was completed by a face in which bloomed all the roses, pinks, and violets, even including blue; the last color was produced by a black beard, which, however carefully shaved it may have been, still manifested itself by the vigor of its tint. This face, remarkable, as we see, in so many respects, was still further adorned with a pair of moustaches so

carefully oiled, and waxed with a cosmetic so redoutable that at a distance one could have sworn it to be of wood; a very exalted nose, with nostrils flaring above the moustache, separated at its upper extremity two great eyes set even with the brow, whose expression did not indicate that his intelligence would ever hamper the growth of their proprietor. The smile that played upon the full lips of the sub-lieutenant was not exactly spiritual; but he seemed so happy and so satisfied with the lot that Nature had set apart for him, that one could, without cruelty, have ventured to inform this fine young man that he had some things to regret in this world.

"I must say, my dear friend, that you are very young," said this fine officer to his companion. "What! for a month a grisette has received you in her room; she is pretty, and you are not ugly; she is eighteen, and you are not a gray-beard; she pleases you and you please her, and, *mille cigares!* you are still in the midst of the purest and most platonic affection. Don't you know, my dear Gratien, it is a thing that reflects dishonor on officers of the corps, from colonel to trumpet-major,— a thing in short, to divert for a year the spirits of the glorious leather-breeches that his Majesty King Louis Philippe has given us for comrades?"

"Ah, my dear Louville," replied the one addressed as Gratien, "not every one has your audacity. For my part, I do not boast of being a great conqueror; more than that, the presence of a third party is enough to turn me to ice, just when I was most ardent."

"What! a third?" exclaimed the sub-lieutenant, sitting upright on his chair, and assuring himself that his moustaches had still the rigidity of awls. "Did you not tell me that she was alone, isolated; that she had the good fortune to be one of those happy children of chance

who have neither father nor mother nor brother nor uncle nor cousin; in short, none of those shadows that overcast the only happy hours of the poor girls' existences, talking to them eternally about housekeeping, and marrying some steady cabinet-maker or honest coppersmith, while an officer, and especially a sub-lieutenant, can make them as proud as queens without their going to half the trouble?"

"I have told you the truth, Louville; she is everything that is most orphaned and alone," answered Gratien.

"Well, what stops you, then? What holds you back? Does Mademoiselle Francotte, her shop-mistress, take the trouble to come and listen to the sweet things you whisper into the little ears of your inamorata? Does she wish to know, the old idiot, whether love talks to-day in a fashion different from that of 1808, or has she really taken to morals in her old age? If that is the case, plant yourself squarely in front of her, Gratien, and remind her of a supper at which the Hussars of the Fifth Regiment blacked her face, as a punishment, not for the multiplication of her loaves and fishes, but of her lovers. Eh! what do you say? It seems to me that I have given you a good enough plan for ridding yourself of that bird of ill-omen."

Gratien shook his head. "It is not that at all," he said.

"Then what is it?" asked Louville.

"Francotte leaves her perfectly free, as she does her other apprentices." And he heaved a sigh.

"Is it the proprietor of the lodgings then?" returned Louville.

"No."

"Ah, then it must be an envious friend? I under-

stand. There 's no such safeguard for a girl's virtue. I will be the sacrifice."

"In what way?"

"I will charge myself with the friend, be she a perfect fright. Eh! There is devotion, or I don't know it."

"You have not hit it yet, my friend."

"The mischief, I have n't! Out with it, then."

"You will laugh, Louville. Do you know what makes me choke back the entreaties that would like nothing better than to come out? Do you know what checks, what draws me back from all the liberties I am dying to take, what freezes my ardor, what makes me stammer in the middle of a sentence, what keeps me chaste and modest, stupid and ridiculous, when I would be everything else? Guess! I will give you a hundred chances."

"If you give me a hundred chances, I shall be no nearer. Come! out with it, Gratien; you know riddles are not in my line."

"Well, my dear Louville, the thing that protects Thérèse from my advances, that has defended her till now, that is the reason why she is not and never will be my mistress, is just simply the great devil of a black spaniel that never leaves her."

"Eh!" ejaculated the chevalier.

"I beg your pardon, monsieur!" said Louville, looking toward the chevalier; "did any one happen to tread on your toes?"

"No, monsieur," said the chevalier, composing himself with his usual meekness.

Louville turned back again toward Gratien, muttering, "Really, these bourgeois are unbearable." Then, resuming the conversation, he remarked, "I must have misunderstood you."

"No."

Louville shouted with laughter, and his laughter was the more formidable that, for an instant, he had thought it a duty to suppress it. The windows of the café rattled with it.

The chevalier profited by the moment when the young man, thrown backward, was holding his sides, to turn his back upon the two officers, but in doing so to approach yet nearer.

"Ah, this is delightful!" cried Louville, when his hilarity had subsided somewhat; "the dragon of the Hesperides has come to life again, Gratien; you are raving, my word of honor!"

Gratien bit his lips. "I too certainly counted on your ridicule to be offended; and yet what I tell you is the exact fact. When I venture a phrase that is a little sentimental, that infernal beast gives a growl as if to warn his mistress; if I continue, he barks; if I persist, he sets up a howl, and his voice drowns mine. I cannot say to Thérèse, 'Dear one, I adore you!' at the pitch of a pack of hounds."

"Then, my dear fellow," said Louville, "substitute pantomime for speech, as they do in the music of the opera in the provinces."

"Pantomime? Ah, well, yes, there's another thing; imagine that this damned dog cannot endure pantomime. When I permit myself a gesture, he growls worse, barks worse, howls worse, and shows his teeth; if I do not put an end to my demonstration, he does more than show them,— he plants them in my flesh, which is embarrassing when speaking of love, without calculating that in the grotesque struggle resulting from our disagreement of opinion I must appear very ridiculous in the eyes of my adored one."

"And you have not been able to captivate by any means the good-will of the abominable quadruped?"

"By none at all."

"But, *mille cigares!* when we were at college, — an epoch that I do not sigh for, — did we not read in the Swan of Mantua, as our professor called him, that there was somewhere a bakery at which they manufactured sops for Cerberus?"

"Black is incorruptible, my dear fellow!"

The chevalier trembled; but neither Gratien nor Louville noticed him.

"Incorruptible? Try him!"

"I stuff my pockets with delicacies for the purpose; he eats them with gratitude, but always stands ready to treat me as he does my gifts."

"And he never sleeps, never goes away?"

"Two or three weeks ago he was absent one afternoon and a night. I had hoped he would never come back, but he has returned."

"And since?"

"He has not budged; the damned dog must be gifted with second sight."

"I think rather," responded Louville, "that your Thérèse is much more cunning than you suspect, and that she has trained the dog to the manœuvres that disconcert your plans."

"However that may be, I am at the end of my patience, my dear Louville; and, on my word, I am ready to abandon the affair."

"That would be a mistake."

"*Pardieu!* I should like to see you in my place."

The chevalier listened with both ears.

"Had I been in your place, my dear Gratien," responded Louville, Mademoiselle Thérèse would have

been sewing buttons on my flannel vests, and to-night I should have given her a supper with messieurs the sub-lieutenants to experiment before you all as to the quantity of champagne a grisette accustomed to drinking clear water could imbibe without rolling under the table."

The chevalier shuddered, without knowing why.

"Ah, my dear Louville, how little you know her!" said Gratien, with a sigh.

"Well, I know others," rejoined Monsieur Louville, fondly caressing his moustache; "a grisette is a grisette, the devil!"

"And the dog? You have forgotten him," said Gratien.

"The dog!" repeated Louville, shrugging his shoulders, "the dog! what are dog-buttons and fried sponges for?"

At these words, the chevalier started in his chair.

"Ah *çà!*" said Louville, in a tone to be heard by Dieudonné, "that bourgeois acts as if he had been bitten by a tarantula."

But the chevalier took no notice; he was too anxious to follow the conversation of the two young men.

"Ah, my faith, no!" said Gratien; "all such means go against the grain with me. Besides, I am a sportsman, and I would rather lose the girl than do the least harm to that magnificent beast."

"Noble youth!" murmured the chevalier.

"Well, then," said Louville, "make up your mind, my dear Gratien; renounce Thérèse, and we shall see if I am not more successful than you."

"Indeed! you would like me to yield the field to you?" said Gratien, whose brow clouded.

"It is better to yield it to a friend, it seems to me, than to leave it for an indifferent person."

"That is not my intention," was Gratien's response;

"and, what is more, Louville, I wish to save you from the mortification of defeat."

"Thanks! do you think Thérèse is the first prude I have encountered?"

"I know you for a great conqueror, Louville," said Gratien; "but," added he, with a smile that was not exempt from irony, "I do not think you are just the style to please Thérèse."

"Well, we shall see, then."

"How shall we see?"

"I swear," cried Louville, whose face was purple with rage, —"I swear, since you defy me, that I shall have that young girl; and, as a proof of my entire confidence in your maladdress, I will yet give you eight days with a clear coast; but in eight days I shall begin the attack."

"Even if I beg you will do nothing of the kind, Louville?"

"Faith! yes, even if you beg me not to do it. For an hour you have assumed a manner that does not rest well on my stomach."

"And the dog?" asked Gratien, trying to laugh.

"The dog?" replied Louville; "as I wish you for eight days to have as fair play as I expect to have, we shall be disembarrassed of it this evening."

The chevalier who for appearance' sake was sipping a cup of *eau sucrée*, nearly strangled on hearing Louville's words.

"This evening?" repeated Gratien, not knowing whether to accept or refuse his comrade's proposition.

"Have you not, to-night, at nine o'clock, a rendezvous with Thérèse at the Porte Morard?" said Louville. "Well, keep your appointment; and I promise you that you shall be able to coo with your turtle-dove quite at

your ease, without fear of being treated by Monsieur Black like a bourgeois of Saint Malo."

Monsieur de la Graverie listened no longer; he rose precipitately, looked at his watch, and left the café with a frightened air that excited comment from the *habitués*. The chevalier, in fact, was so scared that ten paces from the café he was overtaken by a waiter, who politely observed that monsieur was leaving without paying.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" cried the chevalier, "*sac-à-papier!* you are right, my friend. Hold! here are five francs; pay my bill, and keep the change."

And the chevalier began to run with all the speed of which his little legs were capable. It was evident to the chevalier that great danger menaced the dog he coveted.

XX.

IN WHICH MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE SUFFERS INEXPRESSIBLE ANGUISH.

WHAT the officer called Gratien had said of the animal's miraculous intelligence had singularly struck Dieudonné. While the officers were speaking of Black, and Gratien was extolling him, his inclinations in favor of metempsychosis assailed his mind with greater force than ever. It is needless to say that he no more doubted that his spaniel was Thérèse's Black than he doubted that Black's mistress was Thérèse, and that she was the young girl he had seen. He then resolved, without hesitation, to deliver the poor brute from Lieutenant Louville's machinations, which were to be put into execution on the same evening.

The chevalier set off in the direction of the Porte Morard, intending to warn the young girl of the danger menacing at once her virtue and the guardian of her virtue. More than that, considering Black's life to be of much greater importance than the virtue of his mistress, he intended to offer her a good sum of money for the dog.

"But if she should refuse to part with Black!" muttered the chevalier as he hastened along. "Well! I would double the price; I would offer her three hundred, four hundred, five hundred francs; and for five hundred francs, *sac-à-papier!* a grisette, it seems to me, gives quite another thing than a dog. Then, in case I am

not successful — *sac-à-papier!* I must reflect. I do not wish to expose myself to the chance of finding my dear Dumesnil at the outskirts of the town, poisoned under the skin of my poor Black."

The chevalier must have been greatly exasperated to have let slip twice at so short an interval the oath that he used only on great occasions.

When the chevalier reached the Porte Morard, he found the promenade deserted. He brought every sense to bear, fathomed every niche of the gateway; but he discovered neither man nor woman; nine o'clock had just sounded from the cathedral, and at that hour all Chartres went to bed. He began to fear that he had not correctly heard and understood; while counting the minutes, he experienced all the emotions which overwhelm the heart of a lover when he awaits the woman he loves, and the love is his first love.

At last the chevalier heard steps in the darkness, and, straining his eyes, he perceived a feminine form outlined, vague and indistinct, under the arch of the Porte Morard. The chevalier was about to rush forward just as that form, when passing under a street-lamp, was joined by another which seemed to be awaiting it.

It was too late! Thérèse had been met. By whom? By Gratien, probably.

The chevalier felt keenly impatient. He must resort to the wariness of the forest scouts in America, to the strategies of Leather-Stocking and Costa the Indian, — a course which, at the same time, did not fall in with his habits, and was repugnant to his character. Unfortunately, there was not a moment to lose in reflection, if he would remain unperceived; quickly, then, the chevalier let himself glide down the slope leading to the river, and there he lay down flat on his stomach. The carpet of

grass, damp and cold, made him shiver; rheumatism lurked in every blade of it. It was certainly a moment in which to deplore the effervescence of his passions. The chevalier did deplore it from the depths of his heart; but he remained at his post, soaked with dew as he was.

Meanwhile the two young people had crossed the bridge, passing within ten steps of him. Oh, it was indeed the young girl whom Dieudonné had followed in the morning; it was indeed the red-haired officer whose confidences he had surprised. Black walked behind them, keeping step with a gravity that indicated the honest animal's consciousness of the moral character of his real functions.

The officer, if one could judge from his gestures, although speaking to his companion in a low tone, spoke with a degree of vehemence; the young girl appeared to listen attentively; her bearing was sad and melancholy. From time to time the spaniel's silhouette outlined itself against the lighter background of his mistress's robe, as he lifted his head to the height of her hand, as if asking her for a caress.

Suddenly the chevalier heard another step walking along the bridge, as if with the utmost caution. He turned his head toward the side from which the sound came; but the new arrival probably walked bent over behind the parapet, as he could distinguish no one. At this moment the two promenaders came abreast of the chevalier's post of observation; also, the sound that had attracted his attention suddenly ceased. Then, when the young people, retracing their steps, had gone about fifty paces in the opposite direction, Monsieur de la Graverie distinctly heard the dull sound of a soft body thrown upon the ground, and he seemed to see an object the size of an egg roll from a point but a few feet distant

to the middle of the promenade; after which, he realized that the unseen individual who had so clearly manifested his presence was beating a precipitate retreat. Mademoiselle Thérèse and Monsieur Gratien were then at the end of the promenade.

The chevalier calculated that now was the time for the honest project which he had undertaken. He rose to his feet, and with a nimbleness of which he had not believed himself capable he sprang up the embankment, and, risking the serious consequences that might result, he walked on his hands and knees in the mud, and began anxiously to seek what he thought must be a bait prepared to tempt the appetite of poor Black.

It was not all rose-color, this task of the chevalier's; but, after two or three mistakes, which his subtle tact detected in the nick of time, he found what he sought, and discovered that it was a bit of meat, in all likelihood seasoned with arsenic. He hurled the meat away, and with much satisfaction heard it fall into the river.

But Louville's culpable idea had inspired the chevalier with another, an innocent thought in keeping with his character. This was, in the same way as Hop-o-my-Thumb had strewn pebbles for a clew to lead him back to the house, to strew lumps of sugar that should direct Black to him.

A pang of remorse shot through the chevalier's heart in case his strategy should succeed. The remorse was for kidnapping a dog that did not belong to him, and by that act disarming the young girl's virtue. But if he did not get possession of Black, Black was doomed. His intention had been, not to steal the dog, but to buy him. But why had not his mistress presented herself alone to his view? Alone, he could have warned her. On Gratien's arm, it was impossible. He was, therefore,

the victim of circumstances; and the kidnapping of Black, being forced upon him, became a case of justifiable kidnapping. Besides, if he were able to get possession of Black, he did not expect, indeed, to keep him without granting a splendid indemnification to his mistress.

The chevalier, lying flat on his stomach on the declivity, made all these reflections while observing the lovers coming toward him.

Upon finding the first lump of sugar to which his delicacy of scent led him, Black manifested a lively satisfaction. He allowed his mistress to pass on. Then, instead of following her, he began a quest for a second lump of sugar. At last, from bit to bit, he almost reached the spot where the chevalier lay awaiting him, with a piece of sugar in his outstretched hand. As he offered the dainty, the chevalier softly whistled.

The dog, recognizing a man for whose conduct he had nothing but praise, — Black was too intelligent and too just to confound Marianne's bucket of water with the chevalier's lump of sugar, — Black, recognizing, we say, a man whose conduct he could not but praise, approached without suspicion, and even manifested decided satisfaction. The chevalier began with perfidious caresses; then, abusing Black's confidence and seizing his opportunity, he passed his handkerchief through the dog's collar, made a secure knot, and continued to amuse him with morsels of sugar until his mistress, too preoccupied to notice his absence, had retraced her steps and had passed him on the embankment; then following the slope as far as the bridge, he carried Black with him. At the bridge, he stooped, as Louville had done, so that he cleared the bridge without having been seen. The bridge once crossed, he plunged into the town, dragging, *bon gré mal gré*, the booty he had so coveted.

When Monsieur de la Graverie reached his house, he gently inserted the key into the lock, and tried to turn the door on its hinges without noise; but the rusty iron grated, and had for echo Marianne's terrible —

"Who is there?"

Immediately the housekeeper appeared in the corridor; with one hand she held the candle, while with the other she tried to shelter its flame, and screen it from the wind that blew hard through the entry.

"Who goes there?" repeated Marianne.

"It is I," responded the chevalier, thrusting his conquest behind him, and exerting himself to the utmost to dissimulate. "The deuce! can't I enter my own house, then, without undergoing your espionage?"

"Espionage!" repeated Marianne, "espionage! pray understand, Monsieur le Chevalier, that only ill-doers are afraid of their neighbor's eye."

At this moment, the cook perceived the disorder that reigned in the chevalier's attire.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" cried she, falling back a couple of steps, as if she had seen a spectre, "Ah, *mon Dieu!*"

"Well, what is the matter?" said the chevalier, endeavoring to pass her.

"Why, you are without a hat!"

"What of that? Can't I walk bareheaded if it suits me?"

"Your clothes are all soiled with mud!"

"I got splashed."

"Splashed! Holy Virgin! what sort of life are you leading, to return in such a state at such an unseasonable hour?"

At this moment, Black, who until then had kept quiet enough, excited by Marianne's sharp, piercing voice, — which he may have recognized for that of his

ancient enemy, — Black, in his turn, gave vent to a formidable bark.

"Ah, *ma foi!* so much the worse!" muttered the chevalier.

"Just heaven! a dog!" screamed Marianne; "and such a dog! a horrible black brute, with two eyes burning like coals of fire! Hold him back, monsieur, hold him back! don't you see that he is going to devour me?"

"Come, be quiet, and let me pass."

But Marianne did not intend to retreat so. "What is to become of us?" she resumed, continuing her lamentations and endeavoring to force tears into her voice. "*Mon Dieu!* one can judge by the state you are in what the house will be like with such an inmate; fortunately, you are going to chain him up, I hope?"

"Chain him!" cried Monsieur de la Graverie, indignantly. "Never!"

"Are you going to let that animal run loose? Are you going to expose me to his teeth every moment of the day or night? No, monsieur! no, that you shall not."

And, arming herself with her broom, Marianne assumed the attitude of a grenadier of the Old Guard defending his country's hearth-stones.

"You are going to let me drive that dreadful dog away, are you not?" said she; "or I shall leave your house this instant."

Monsieur de la Graverie's patience was exhausted; he pushed aside his housekeeper so brusquely that she lost her balance and fell, uttering a shriek. The light was extinguished, but the way was clear.

The chevalier strode across Marianne's form, cleared the vestibule, and climbed the stairs with the agility of a young man; then, pushing the dog into his chamber, he entered it behind him, locked the door with a double

turn, and shot the bolts with all the palpitations that might have agitated a thoroughly smitten lover had the spaniel's rôle been taken by an adored mistress.

The chevalier took three of his best cushions from his easy-chairs, heaped them on top of each other, and made a bed for Black, dirty as he was. Black offered no objections, turned himself around three times, and lay down curled up in a heap.

The chevalier gazed affectionately at him until he was asleep, after which he undressed, went to bed, and slept in his turn.

For three weeks the chevalier had not slept so soundly.

XXI.

IN WHICH ARMED FORCE RESTORES PEACE TO THE HOUSE.

On awakening in the morning, the chevalier felt himself aching with pain in every limb; for the first time in twenty-four hours, he reflected on the imprudence into which his rashness had betrayed him, and groaned to think that pleurisy, an attack of the gout, or rheumatism could easily be the outcome of it. He felt his pulse, which he had neglected to do for a month, and finding it calm, soft, regular, and moderately accelerated, he became reassured, reminding himself that there is a God who watches over all inebriates. Reassured as to his health, he leaped out of bed and began to play with his dog, unmindful that there was no fire in the room.

About nine o'clock Marianne entered her master's room as usual, but her face was more than usually sour. However, the night had brought counsel. The prudent woman said no more of the departure to which she had sworn herself on the night before.

For his part, the chevalier was too happy in the possession of the object coveted for more than a month, to be wanting in magnanimity. One thought, however, still poisoned his felicity,— a thought half fear, half remorse.

The chevalier trembled lest the young owner of Black should happen to discover and claim her own. He asked himself what would become of his reputation as an honest man, if the means by which he had obtained the

animal should be spread through the town. Then his thought of the night before returned. Had he indeed the right to take Black? Had Black's life been threatened by the sub-lieutenant?

Finally, the chevalier was not without remorse as to consequences that the seizure of Black might produce upon the poor child's life; and it was in vain for him to say that he had snatched Black from certain death: he could not, in this respect, completely reassure his conscience. To attempt to do so, he put into an envelope a bank-note for five hundred francs, and addressed it to Mademoiselle Thérèse, at Mademoiselle Francotte's. With this he enclosed some lines, in which he informed her, without giving any motive for his liberality, that such a sum would also reach her the following year. With this sum the young girl would be guarded from the wicked counsels of want, — that tempting devil, regarded by Monsieur de la Graverie as the most redoutable of all devils. Thus, with a thousand francs, the spaniel's loss would be amply compensated.

It remained, now, to keep the dog. The chevalier resolved, in furtherance of this design, never to permit him to go beyond the threshold of the street-door. The garden should be consecrated to his service; the walls were so high that he need not fear the curiosity of his neighbors. Black should sleep in his master's room. Whenever he was obliged to be absent for one, two, or three hours, the dog should be shut into the dressing-room, securely fastened with a special lock; this would guarrantee the poor animal's safety from Marianne's persecutions, concerning which the chevalier was not without apprehension.

Only Marianne's indiscretion could trouble the happy days which the Chevalier de la Graverie promised him-

self in the society of Black. But that very evening chance happened to place the intractable cook wholly at the chevalier's mercy.

Neither before nor after dinner did the chevalier go out. He breakfasted with his friend, he dined with his friend. Finally, in accordance with the programme he had sketched out, that evening he walked in the garden.

While the chevalier was busy with a brier-rose which he had himself budded in the spring, and whose sprouting was not satisfactory, Black, who in spite of the affectionate care bestowed on him appeared to regret something, took advantage of the half-open door of the garden to seek out a road that should lead him back to the one his heart cherished. Unfortunately for his project of flight, before reaching the street, he was obliged to cross the vestibule and pass the kitchen door. Now, from this door emanated a truly delectable odor of roast meat.

Black entered the kitchen, which at first sight seemed to be deserted. He looked about for the source of the perfume. While searching, he suddenly stopped like a dog that has treed his game. He began to bark at a great cupboard, as if he would accuse the cupboard of concealing what he sought.

Meanwhile, Marianne came in, quickening her pace at Black's barking. She had already seized her ordinary weapon; but Monsieur de la Graverie, who had discovered Black's disappearance, followed close upon the heels of Marianne. The chevalier's attitude and his air of authority caused the broom to fall from the cook's hands.

Meanwhile, not at all diverted by what was passing around him, so absorbed was he, the spaniel continued to bark furiously at the cupboard. The chevalier swung

both doors wide open, and, to his great amazement, disclosed a cuirassier, who, recognizing the master of the house in the chevalier, respectfully carried his hand to his helmet in military salute.

Marianne sank upon a chair as if about to faint.

The chevalier comprehended all. But, instead of going off into a fit of ungovernable rage, he at once perceived what an advantage could be gained from the occurrence. He gave the dog a caress by way of thanks, and beckoned Marianne to follow him. He led her no farther than the vestibule. Then he stopped and gravely said: —

"Marianne, you earn in my house three hundred francs in wages; you rob me of six hundred — "

Marianne endeavored to interrupt the chevalier, but he stopped her with an imperative gesture, and continued: —

"You rob me of six hundred, at which I shut my eyes; this affords you the best place in the city. Moreover, I alone know how to endure your unendurable character; you have just deserved to be driven away in disgrace. I shall not discharge you."

Marianne endeavored to interrupt her master with thanks.

"Wait! my indulgence has its conditions."

Marianne bowed in token of her readiness to pass under the Caudine Forks, should it please her master to erect them.

"Here," solemnly proceeded the chevalier, "is a dog that I have found; for reasons which are not necessary to explain to you, I intend to keep him, and, more than that, I wish him to be happy with me. If through your blabbing any one reclaims this dog; if through your spite he falls ill; if, in short, through your intentional negligence he escapes, — I give you my word of honor

you leave my house at once. And now, Marianne, you can, if you like, go and find your cuirassier. I have been a soldier myself," said the chevalier drawing himself up; "I have no prejudice against the military."

Marianne was so ashamed of being caught *in flagrante delicto*, there was such an accent of firmness and resolution in the chevalier's words, that she turned on her heel without replying and re-entered her kitchen.

As to the chevalier, he was enchanted with this incident, which with his other precautions seemed to guarantee secure possession of the spaniel. He was not deceived. From that day began for Dieudonné and his four-footed friend, a beatific existence.

Possession rendered the chevalier neither lukewarm nor indifferent to the animal's charms; on the contrary, every day he became more warmly attached to the treasure which had cost him so much trouble and care; each day he discovered in Black qualities so superior that at times his ideas of the perpetual succession of existences one after another returned to his mind. At such times he could not help regarding Black with a degree of emotion; he spoke to him of the past, recalling all the episodes in his life in which Dumesnil had taken part. At times, straying amid these sweet reminiscences as in a delightful wood, he would forget himself and cry, as captain to veteran, "Do you remember?" And if, at such a moment, the dog raised his intelligent face and gazed at his master with his expressive eyes, the doubts still retained by the chevalier fell from his mind, as the dead leaves fall from a tree; and during the few hours throughout which this access of monomania lasted, he could not refrain from treating Black with the grateful deference that he had formerly exhibited toward his friend.

This state of affairs lasted six whole months. Truly, the spaniel, unless he were the most difficult of dogs, must have considered himself the most fortunate of all quadrupeds; yet, sufficiently often to disquiet the chevalier, he appeared sad, anxious, preoccupied. He gazed at the walls and watched the doors with a countenance very expressive of melancholy; and by these signs he seemed to desire the chevalier to understand that neither the time which had elapsed, nor the excellent treatment of which he was the object, had caused him to forget his mistress. And this persistence in attachment, entirely outside of the old ties which had bound Dumesnil to himself alone, was what arrested most efficaciously the chevalier's comforting idea as to Black's identity with his friend.

One evening in the spring, as night came on, Monsieur de la Graverie, intending to pay some calls, was shaving himself. During the night before, and throughout the entire day, Black had been more restless than usual. Suddenly the chevalier heard piercing shrieks ascending the stairway, and in the midst of the shrieks he could distinguish these words, uttered in accents of despair by Marianne: —

"Monsieur! Monsieur! help! help! your dog is running away!"

Monsieur de la Graverie threw down his razor, wiped his half-shaved face, snatched the first coat that came to hand, and in an instant was on the ground-floor. At the threshold of the open door he found Marianne, who, with a frightened aspect very genuine and real, was gazing after the spaniel which was disappearing at the end of the street, scampering away at the top of his speed.

"Monsieur," said Marianne, in piteous appeal, "I

swear that I did not leave the door open; it was the carrier."

"I gave you warning, Marianne," replied the enraged chevalier; "consider yourself no longer in my service. Make up your bundle, and leave the house instantly."

Then, without waiting for a response from the despairing cook, without reflecting that his head was bare, and that his feet were in slippers, the chevalier followed in pursuit of the spaniel.

XXII.

IN WHICH BLACK LEADS THE CHEVALIER.

As he very nearly knew the direction he must take, the chevalier lost no time in seeking the route. On the contrary, he darted off without hesitation and walked so rapidly that, turning at the cathedral, he saw Black a hundred steps ahead in the direction of l'Ane-qui-vielle, and called him; but, like the famous dog of Jean de Nivelles, understanding that he was pursued, Black went through the Rue de Changes, and Monsieur de la Graverie saw him no more until they arrived at the Faubourg de la Grappe, where, without knowing the number, he believed the spaniel's former owner to live.

It is true that, arrived there, the chevalier saw Black at so short a distance ahead that he had a moment's hope of recovering him. Perhaps the dog did not wish to be entirely lost sight of by the chevalier; or it may be that the chevalier did not know so well as a humbler citizen of Chartres the labyrinth of streets in which Black seemed to be lost, so often did he catch sight of the spaniel, panting, but yet having strength enough to keep in advance. In fact, just as Monsieur de la Graverie extended his hand to seize him by the magnificent collar which he had had made for him, Black bounded aside, and sprang into the passage of the third house of the faubourg at the left.

This passage was narrow, damp, filthy, and dark; and yet the chevalier did not hesitate to follow his ungrateful

pensioner into it. He did not ask himself what he should say in case the animal should bring him face to face with the young girl whom he had robbed.

After having felt around for some time in the dark hole, the chevalier at last laid his hand upon a rope. This rope, stretched there to act as a balustrade, indicated a staircase. The Chevalier de la Graverie felt about for the steps with his feet, and, having found the first one, guided by a feeble gleam of light which could be distinguished overhead through a wretched window covered with dust, and in which the missing panes were replaced by sheets of oiled paper, he began to mount the stairs. He reached the first landing.

Every door was closed. The chevalier listened. Not a sound issued from the rooms; evidently, the dog had not stopped there.

The chevalier grasped the rope again and continued the ascent. Leaving the first landing, the stairway narrowed, which did not prevent the chevalier's attaining the second. As he had done at the first story, the chevalier listened. The second story was as silent as the first.

After the second flight, the stairs of the Faubourg de la Grappe terminated in a ladder, — as the bodies of those women described by Virgil, which terminated in fish. The chevalier began to fear lest the dog might have profited by some means of exit overlooked by himself, to escape from the house and go into the court. But just then he heard overhead the mournful and prolonged howl by which dogs, according to the popular belief, announce the death of their master.

That lugubrious sound in the desolate building so apparently deserted, froze the chevalier's blood in his veins; his hair stood erect, and he felt the cold perspiration bathing his brow. But almost immediately it occurred to

him that Black had arrived at his mistress's door, and, finding it shut, had addressed that despairing appeal to her through the door. According to all probability, on this hypothesis, the young girl was not at home. The chevalier could join Black there at the door, and, blockaded in a narrow corridor, Black would be forced to surrender.

The idea supplied the chevalier with fresh courage. He clung, then, to the rounds of the ladder, and attempted the ascent. This recalled to his mind that hour of despair when, instead of mounting a ladder, he had made a descent by means of his bed-clothes. Having reached this point, his thoughts went a step further: he remembered Mathilde, and, however hardened his heart had become, he gave utterance to a sigh. But, while sighing, he continued to climb.

When the chevalier had mounted about twenty rounds, he found his body half-way through a trap-door, which opened into an attic, where it was entirely dark. At first, the garret seemed to be as empty as the rest of the house, and yet there could be no doubt that the animal's course had ended here. In fact, the chevalier had hardly set his foot on the floor of the room before the dog ran to him with a caress, and an expression of tenderness the chevalier could not remember ever before to have seen on his face. But no sooner had the chevalier put out his hand, thus revealing his intention, than Black quickly dodged away, and went to crouch at the foot of a pallet vaguely outlined in the obscurity. The pallet was so placed in a corner, under the roof, that it escaped the feeble ray of light penetrating the retreat through a narrow dormer.

There was not a sound, not a stir in this loft.

"Is there any one here?" demanded the chevalier.

There was no reply; but a moment later Black came and rubbed against his legs. At the same instant the chevalier perceived the atmosphere of the loft to be charged with a rank, penetrating, choking odor. His fears were renewed; he wished to run away, and he called Black. Black set up a second howl more sinister than the first, and hid himself under the bed.

The chevalier could not decide to abandon Black. He looked for a lamp. In the search his foot struck against an iron chafing-dish and overturned it; at almost the same moment his fingers came in contact with a phosphorus box. In an instant he had a blaze. He lighted a lamp that he saw on a chair. Then he approached the pallet.

Upon this pallet a woman was lying; her face was purple, her lips were black; profuse perspiration had matted her hair upon her temples; her teeth were set. The body was motionless and seemed already rigid with the chill of death. It could be barely seen that the soul had not yet quitted the clay by the quivering of the bluish eyelids and the feeble sigh that escaped from the drawn lips and proved that she had not yet finished with grief.

In this half-dead form Monsieur de la Graverie recognized the young girl whom he had pursued that Sunday in the preceding autumn, from whom, in short, he had stolen Black. He spoke to her; but the girl was too weak to reply. Yet she heard him, for she raised her eyelids, turned a pair of haggard eyes toward him, and moved a hand.

The Chevalier de la Graverie, touched with profound pity mingled with some remorse, took the hand. It was like ice.

"*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*" said the chevalier, speaking aloud as was his wont. "I cannot leave this poor

creature to die so; and as I have crossed the city without my hat to chase after Black, I think, indeed, that I can go back in the same state to bring Monsieur Robert."

The chevalier did not know Monsieur Robert; but he knew that he was a popular physician in Chartres.

"I really owe her that; indeed, I owe her that," repeated the chevalier, looking at her, and again remarking, as he had done on the former occasion, the wonderful resemblance of this young girl to Mathilde, as Mathilde had been at her age. And leaving the dying woman in the keeping of Black, he descended the ladder more quickly than he had mounted it, although it was easier to go up than down.

The physician was absent; the chevalier left the young girl's address, with details which would help the doctor to find her without other direction. Then, at a run, he set out for the Faubourg de la Grappe.

Monsieur de la Graverie found the garret as he had left it; only, Black, to ward off the icy chill to which his mistress was a prey, had got upon the bed, and was lying across the sick girl's feet. Observing that he was doing his best to keep Thérèse warm, the chevalier gained an idea; it was to aid the dog as far as possible in the task the former had undertaken. He righted the warmer, heaped together the fragments of coal that he found scattered on the floor, and tried to make them burn.

It must be confessed that the poor chevalier acquitted himself of the task with greater good-will than adroitness. He himself recognized his awkwardness, and did not the less need the appeal of his kind heart and Black's example to stimulate him to emulation. But the chevalier could not accomplish without grumbling what he nevertheless regarded as a duty. So, as usual, he muttered half aloud: —

"That devil of a dog! he must go and run away; what more could he want? He was well fed; he slept on a fine wolf's-skin, as soft and smooth as he could wish; what could have put it into his head to regret this dirty hole? Ah, I was quite right to anathematize and abandon every species of affection. If you had not preserved any for your mistress, foolish animal!" — saying which, he regarded Black with inexpressible tenderness, — "we should at this moment be very tranquil, very happy in our little garden; you would be playing among the flowers on the lawn, and as for me, I should be pruning my noisette roses which stand in great need of it. And this infernal coal does not burn! It never will burn, *sac-à-papier!* If I could only find some one in this house to take care of this poor thing! Money would spare me this disagreeable business; I would gladly have given twice over all any one would have asked. Come, now! would not that have amounted to the same thing?"

"No, chevalier," said a voice behind Dieudonné, "no, it would not have amounted to the same; and you yourself will find it out, if we succeed in saving this sick person in whom you have interested yourself."

"Ah, it is you, doctor?" said the chevalier, who had been startled at the first sound, but who, having turned, had recognized the grave and gentle face of the physician. "The trouble, do you see, — I can admit it to you, — is that I have a horror of sick people and a great dread of disease."

"Your merit and the approval of your conscience will be the greater," replied the doctor; "then, too, you may be assured, one gets used to everything, and by the time you have cared for half a score of such cases, you will not ask for any better profession. Well, now! where is my patient?"

"There," answered the chevalier, pointing to the bed.

The doctor advanced toward the cot; but Black, seeing an unknown person approach his young mistress, gave utterance to a menacing bark.

"Eh, now, Black! eh, now, my boy," said the chevalier; "what is the matter?" and he quieted the dog, patting him.

The doctor took the lamp, and held the unsteady light over the invalid's face. "Aha!" said he, "I suspected as much, but I did not suppose the case was so serious."

"What is it, then?" demanded the chevalier.

"What is it? It is cholera, the true cholera, the Asiatic cholera in all its hideous guise!"

"*Sac-à-papier!*" cried the chevalier. And he ran to the ladder. But before he could reach it his legs failed him, and he sank upon a stool.

"Why, what is the matter, chevalier?" asked the doctor.

"Cholera!" repeated the other, gasping and helpless; "the cholera! Why, the cholera is contagious, doctor!"

"Some say endemic; others, contagious; we are not agreed as to that."

"But your own opinion?" demanded Dieudonné.

"My own opinion is that it is contagious," replied the doctor; "but we need not be concerned about that now."

"What! not be concerned? I beg you to understand that I am concerned about nothing else!"

And, in truth, the chevalier was as pale as a corpse; great beads of sweat rolled down his face; his teeth chattered.

"Come, now," said the doctor, "you, so brave when it was a case of yellow fever, to be afraid of cholera!"

"Of yellow fever!" stammered Dieudonné; "how do you know that I am brave when it is a case of yellow fever?"

"Good!" responded the doctor. "Have n't I seen you put to the proof?"

"When was it?" demanded the chevalier, with a dazed look.

"When you took care of your friend, poor Captain Dumesnil, at Papaete, was I not there?"

"There! you? You were there?" cried the astonished chevalier.

"I understand; you do not recognize the young doctor of the 'Dauphin;' I was then twenty-six, now I am forty-one. Fourteen or fifteen years change a man somewhat; you too, chevalier, you have rounded out."

"Stop! stop!" ejaculated the chevalier, — "what! was it you, doctor?"

"Yes, it was I. I have left the service, and am established at Chartres. Two mountains do not meet, chevalier, but two men do; and the proof is that we two are at the bedside of a sick person worth little more than the poor captain."

"But cholera, doctor! the cholera!"

"It is first cousin to yellow fever, the black plague, the black vomit. Have no more fear of one than of another; they all belong to the same breed of mad dogs, and bite only those that run away. Have courage, *morbleu!* I see a bit of red ribbon in your button-hole that says you have stood fire; call up your old soldier days, and march against the cholera as against the enemy."

"But," stammered the old soldier, "don't you think, doctor, that we are unnecessarily exposing ourselves; and do you think we have any chance of saving this unhappy young girl?"

Touched in his vanity, the chevalier, as may be seen, resigned himself to speak in the plural.

"Very little chance, I confess," replied the doctor;

"the patient is already in the cold stage: the nails are black, the eyes distorted, the extremities are cold, and I will wager that the tongue is already like ice. But, no matter! she is alive, and we must fight the destroyer. I am not in the habit, you are aware, of yielding a foot; I am of the race of bull-dogs, chevalier; as long as my teeth have a hold, I hang on. But we have lost too much time. To work!"

The chevalier, under the feeling of terror inspired by the word "cholera," was nearly useless to the doctor. Happily, the doctor, who had suspected, from the few words of the chevalier to his servant, that he was going to a cholera patient, had brought in his case some ether and veratrum, the two remedies that he used in cholera. Poor Dieudonné went about the room as if he had lost his mind; but at length the calmness and conscientiousness with which the man of science approached the patient, inhaling her breath and touching her, allayed his apprehensions and diminished his fear. His affection for the poor dog had already made a breach in the sentiment of egotism which he had installed in his heart; his pride, and especially his sympathies for the sufferings of the sick girl, being brought into action, gradually achieved a victory. He, in turn, drew near the couch of the dying woman, and assisted the doctor in placing around her the bricks which the latter had torn from the wall and heated.

The spaniel doubtless understood the purport of the care bestowed on his mistress; he jumped down from the bed to leave a clear field for the two men, and began to lick the chevalier's hand.

This token of gratitude keenly touched Dieudonné; the hallucinations of metempsychosis seized his brain, and he cried with enthusiasm,—

"Be calm, my poor Dumesnil! we shall save her!"

The doctor was too much occupied with his patient to heed the strange words the chevalier had spoken to the black dog; he noticed only their general import.

"Yes," said he, "chevalier, yes, let us hope! The extremities are beginning to grow warm; but if she recovers, she will indeed owe it to you."

"Really!" cried the chevalier.

"*Pardieu!* but you must not leave your work incomplete. I beg your pardon, chevalier, for having to send you down the street."

"Oh, I am at your disposal."

"You understand that my presence is necessary here?"

"*Sac-à-papier!* I should think I understood it!"

The doctor drew a little note-book from his pocket, and pencilled a few lines on a leaf which he tore from it.

"Run to an apothecary's, and bring back this prescription," he said.

"Whatever you will, doctor, provided that I can save her," said Dieudonné, entering into the struggle with heart and soul, and burning his ships.

The chevalier required not more than ten minutes to go and return, and when he entered the garret he found the doctor with a smiling countenance, which amply rewarded him for his trouble.

"She is better, then?" cried the chevalier, drawing near the couch to look at the patient, whose face had certainly lost its corpse-like hue.

"Yes, she is better, chevalier; and by the help of God, I hope that Mademoiselle, in three months, will present us a little one that shall be as like you as two peas are like each other."

"Like me! me! mademoiselle — a child?"

"Ah, you are gallant, chevalier! I heard of you at Papaete: the beautiful Mahouni told me of you."

"Doctor, I swear —"

"Come, come, chevalier; don't be reserved with me; sooner or later, I must have been told. Is it not my business to usher man into the world as well as to help him out of it?"

"But, once more, doctor, what makes you think —"

"This, *mordieu!*" said the doctor, holding out a gold ring that he had drawn from the finger of the patient, still inert, — "this, which in your absence, yielding to the feeling of curiosity, I have opened and examined. Do not deny your paternity any longer, dear monsieur; your secret is in good hands; a physician is obliged to exercise more discretion than a confessor."

The chevalier, stupefied, believing himself to be dreaming, took the ring, and, introducing his thumb-nail into the circumference, he opened it and read: —

"Dieudonné de la Graverie. Mathilde de Florsheim."

His emotion was so great that he fell upon his knees, sobbing and praying at once.

XXIII.

THE CHEVALIER AS A SICK-NURSE.

The doctor attributed the chevalier's emotion to his thankfulness on learning that there was some hope of saving the patient. He let the chevalier finish his prayer and wipe his eyes; then, thinking it his duty to utilize this exalted mind for the benefit of the poor girl, he asked,—

"And now, chevalier, what are we to do with this poor child? It is impossible for her to stay in this infected hole. Would you like me to have her taken to the hospital?"

"To the hospital!" cried the chevalier, with indignant accent.

"Indeed! she will be infinitely better off than here, and, without wishing to read you a lesson, chevalier, permit me to say I find it very strange that you should have left in such a miserable hole a woman on whose finger you have put this ring, especially at a time when this quarter is decimated by disease."

"I shall have her carried to my own house, doctor."

"That is something like! That is the right spirit! It has come rather late; but, as the proverb says, better late than never. It will make the good Chartrain souls croak a little; but, for my part, chevalier, with the opinion I had formed of you, I prefer to see you commit this sin than the other,— to see you lacking in propriety rather than in humanity."

The chevalier made no reply, and bent his head; his soul was agitated by a thousand different sentiments. He thought of Mathilde, whose child this unhappy young girl must be; he went backward twenty-five years; he beheld again the days, so calm, so happy, — of their sports at first, of their love, later. It was the first time, perhaps, in eighteen years that he had dared to cast his eyes over the past, and he experienced a feeling of shame that he had dreamed of comparing the contemptible pleasures of satisfied self-indulgence with the joys so impetuous, so keen, that, after more than twenty years had rolled away, they yet had power to kindle his soul.

While gazing on the poor sick girl the chevalier felt bitter remorse, his conscience telling him that, whatever wrong the mother had been guilty of, he had none the less owed a duty to this child, and that duty he had not performed. Nor did he fail to reflect upon the sad consequences to the poor child of the theft of her guardian; perhaps in taking away Black he had left her defenceless against treachery. He vowed that he would make reparation; for he recognized in all this the hand of God.

Seeing him so profoundly absorbed in his meditations, the doctor supposed the chevalier was shrinking from the consequences that must follow the establishment of the young invalid in his house.

"Come, after all," said he to the chevalier, "reflect a little; perhaps it will be possible to find some kind people, who, for money, will consent to overcome their repugnance to this devilish malady and receive the poor little thing; that would be better, perhaps, and satisfactory all round."

And for the last time there was a struggle in Dieudonné's mind between a care for his own comfort, the lingering dread still inspired by the contagious disease,

and the good inspirations of his heart; let us say, to his credit, that the struggle did not last long. The chevalier shook his head and arose.

"To my house, doctor! to my house, to no place other than my own house!" cried he, with an energy that persons of weak character know so well how to employ, when, by chance, they have formed a resolution.

Day was dawning when the litter, borrowed from the hospital, and on which they had placed the sick one, set out for the Rue des Lices.

The chevalier and Black followed this sad procession, which, as usual in such cases, encountered in its course the curiosity of the country people and milk-carriers already on their way toward town.

When Monsieur de la Graverie's house was reached, the door was found locked. The proprietor, who, hatless and in slippers, had not thought of taking a pass-key, rang the bell and plied the knocker, but all in vain; there was no response. He then remembered that, on the evening before, he had dismissed Marianne; and he concluded that, in order to wreak a final vengeance upon her master, the cross-grained housekeeper had seen fit to obey to the letter the order she had received to pack and be off.

There was but one resource, — to fetch a locksmith, who was sent for. Happily, there was one in the neighborhood.

But the door was locked with a double turn; the operation of opening it was long, and gave the quarter time to awake. The neighbors came to their windows; servants emerged from the houses and questioned each other. And when the chevalier had gone to seek a locksmith, some of them drew aside the curtains of the litter to find out who occupied it; and, having discov-

ered the occupant, every one asked what young woman this could be upon whom the chevalier was lavishing such care, and whom he was even admitting into his house, to which, hitherto, the whole female sex had been forbidden entrance.

As usually happens in similar cases, ten distinct stories were set in circulation at once; all differed, but naturally not one of them was flattering to the chevalier, whose reputation was seriously damaged. The whole town gabbled. The frequenters of the Café Jousse and the Chartrain Club-house found it a dainty bit. The good people of the Muret whispered quite low, made the sign of the cross, and said that, decidedly, the chevalier was a man to be shunned.

The chevalier thought nothing at all about it, not he. He was possessed with the idea that in all probability he had just discovered the daughter of the only woman whom he had ever loved.

It is our opinion, and perhaps we shall be regarded as an optimist or a simpleton, which amounts to very nearly the same thing, — it is our opinion, we say, that there are few hearts in which the remembrance of an injury sweeps away that of a benefit; at any rate, the chevalier's was not such a one. Little by little, images of the past became cleared of the clouds of sadness and grief by which they were overcast. Mathilde reappeared before his eyes as she had been in the happy days of youth, beautiful and pure, loving and devoted; he dwelt no longer on the events that had separated them, on her ingratitude, her infidelity; he remembered the forget-me-nots he had gathered for his little companion on the banks of the stream that wound through the park, and how the little blue flowers had so entrancingly enwreathed her blond hair. Then, with great tears welling up from

his heart, he reflected that in all the rest of his existence he had never experienced joys to be compared with those, — surely, not those he had owed to the beautiful Mahouni. Never had the pleasures of the table, nor the delights of horticulture, moved his soul as had this single backward glance; and the chevalier asked himself if the happiest ones on earth were not those who, at the end of the score, had the greatest winnings of this sort of memories.

Monsieur de la Graverie had not yet attained to regret, but he had made a comparison. For the present he must consider the sick girl; and the care she required drew the chevalier from the revery to which he would now so willingly have yielded himself.

Marianne had done with the key of her room as she had done with that of the house; she had carried them away as if the house had belonged to her. Monsieur de la Graverie was obliged to install the poor invalid in his own room and in his own bed. At this, his personal solicitude was somewhat startled; he asked himself with some anxiety where he should pass the coming night, and especially where he could be placed if the contagion were to seize him in turn. Then, as he was absolutely alone in the house, he had to apply himself to the cares of housekeeping, to prepare the tisanes, and get his own breakfast, — an operation particularly disagreeable to him.

While toiling and moiling and twenty times cursing his ex-housekeeper, the chevalier succeeded in discovering three eggs in the midst of the dreadful chaos in which Marianne had purposely left the housekeeping and the cooking utensils; with these he achieved his first repast, anxiously inquiring how he could digest a meal, however frugal, made, for the first time in twenty years, without tea, — an accompaniment which he regarded as

absolutely necessary in order to stimulate his stomach to activity. His solicitude was the greater because the eggs had remained twelve seconds too long in the boiling water, so that, instead of eating at his breakfast three soft-boiled eggs, he had eaten three hard-boiled eggs.

About noon Marianne arrived; she had come for her wages. The sight of her had shed on the chevalier a ray of hope; he thought the old vixen was coming to ask him to take her back into favor, and he prepared to welcome her petition with a smile of good omen. He had decided to overlook all the unreasonableness of his ex-housekeeper, and to sign, even with an increase of wages, a new contract with her, and thus at once disembarrass himself of the domestic cares so repugnant to him.

The chevalier had counted without his host.

Marianne was brimming over with icy dignity, mingled with disdain, while receiving her money; and when the chevalier, forgetting both her character and the sense of propriety which should have closed his mouth, asked her, in a tone that essayed to be pathetic, how she could decide to abandon him in this embarrassing position, the ex-housekeeper replied that no honest woman could with decency live in a house such as his, and that if he needed assistance that jade could give it to him. After which she majestically departed.

Left alone, Monsieur de la Graverie fell into a fit of profound despair. In fact, he knew that every tongue in the town was wagging at his expense; that he would find himself disgraced, vilified, pointed at. The life he had been leading, tranquil as a lake, serene as the sky, smooth as a mirror, he saw destroyed forever, and he began to think that he had, perhaps, acted hastily in taking the young girl into his house.

In vain Black went from the bedside of his former mistress to the easy-chair into which the master he had known for the last six months had plunged himself; in vain he wagged his tail, laid his head on the chevalier's knee, or licked the hand that hung by his side, all in token of approbative thankfulness; nothing could win the chevalier from his profound meditations.

The spirit of man, like the ocean, has its ebb and flow. In his brown study the chevalier even thought of getting rid of both the young girl and her spaniel, by placing them, the one with the other, in the hospital. Somewhat ashamed of this unworthy idea he argued with himself in extenuation of it: for instance, that the very best people went to the hospitals; that he himself should go there if he was ill; that if the care was less disinterested, it was, on the other hand, more intelligent; that skill replaced devotion; and so on.

The tide was rising, — the tide of wrong feeling! Since he had been in possession of Black, he had not had a whole day exempt from disquiet, from anxiety. Six months ago his peaceful existence had disappeared. To what dangers had he not exposed himself in recovering the spaniel! Was not contagion about to seize him in turn, especially if, finding neither servant nor nurse before night, he were forced to keep watch with the young girl, and to breathe, during a whole night, the injurious atmosphere of a sick-room!

The tide still rose; as wave presses on wave, so thought followed thought! Was it not possible, the chevalier suggested to himself, that accident had placed Mathilde's ring on the finger of Thérèse? Did her possession of the ring justify his conclusion that the sick girl was Madame de la Graverie's daughter? Then, when all was said and done, if it could be proved to be

so, was it right for the injured husband to expose himself to death in order to save this fruit of her adultery?

The flood was very high, as can be seen! This idea, that Thérèse was not the child of Mathilde de la Graverie, had grown so imperious that the chevalier resolved to question her.

At this moment the chevalier's eyes were directed toward the dressing-table on which, in perfect order, stood the captain's toilet articles; then, by a very natural succession of ideas, he chanced to think of the travelling-case in which they had been inclosed, and, in particular, of the mysterious packet which was to be given to Madame de la Graverie if she were still living, and to be cast into the fire if she were dead. He thought that packet, in all probability, would contain a solution of the problem that so vexed him; and, as it is not easy to stop when once on the downward path, he resolved, come what might of it, to open that packet, and satisfy himself as to whether it contained any reference to Thérèse.

Through following out his resolution to avoid unnecessary emotions, the chevalier had never removed the false bottom of the travelling-case since the day when he had there laid away the mysterious packet. From that day he had forced himself to forget the packet, what it might contain, and his friend's injunction. But the extraordinary events which had just upheaved his life had thrown him into a train of thought that caused him to overcome his reluctance. He was convinced that in the message his friend Dumesnil had addressed to Madame de la Graverie he would find something to relieve the embarrassment of his situation. Never, it is true, had Dumesnil pronounced the name of Madame de la Graverie; but it was quite justifiable to suppose that the captain had known something of her destiny.

Monsieur de la Graverie, weighed down by keen emotion, went directly to the cabinet where he had, on his return from Papaete, put away the travelling-case. Quite naturally, the case was where he had left it. The chevalier brought it forth, placed the lamp on the mantelpiece, put the travelling-case on his knees, opened the first compartment, then the second, and found himself face to face with the dreaded packet and its large black seals.

For the first time, the chevalier noticed the color of the sealing-wax. He hesitated to open it. But at length, continuing to follow the train of ideas that drew him on, he tore off the wrapper.

Some thousand-franc notes fell with its fragments and lay scattered upon the carpet. An open letter remained in the chevalier's hands: —

If your wife is still living when you return to France, send her the enclosed package and the bank-notes which accompany it; but if, on the contrary, she is dead, or if you have no hope of knowing what has become of her, Dieudonné, in the name of honor, recall your promise, throw this package into the fire, and employ the money in good works.

Your faithful friend,

DUMESNIL.

Again and again the chevalier turned the package in his hands; he was, on the whole, sufficiently perplexed as to the relations which had existed between Dumesnil and his wife. Once or twice he was moved to tear the second wrapper as he had torn the first; but the captain's adjuration, "Dieudonné, in the name of honor, recall your promise, throw this package into the fire," fell under his eyes, and, that he might not yield to temptation, he tossed the packet into the midst of the flames.

The covers blackened, writhed, fell apart, and dis-

closed to the view, amidst a quantity of letters, a lock of ashen blond hair which the chevalier recognized as Mathilde's.

At that sight the chevalier was no longer master of his words or deeds.

"What the devil!" he shouted; "had Dumesnil a lock of my wife's hair?"

And thrusting his hand into the flames, he seized the hair and the paper in which it had been wrapped. He dashed it to the hearth, and set his foot upon it to extinguish the fire. Then, carefully picking up the charred remains, the chevalier observed some lines in the captain's handwriting on the paper which was wrapped about the hair.

But the fire had done its work. At every touch the paper crumbled; at last, however, there remained one little corner, scorched, but not entirely burned. On this fragment he succeeded in deciphering the following words:—

"I have charged Monsieur Chalier . . . your daughter . . . in the . . . his guardianship . . ."

A faint light dawned in the chevalier's mind: he recalled how the young doctor, since then become Doctor Robert, had mentioned, in speaking of the captain's visit to the "Dauphin," — the fatal visit during which Dumesnil had taken the yellow fever, — that he had gone to speak about a child to Monsieur Chalier. Had Dumesnil, then known something concerning the fortunes of Madame de la Graverie, even after having left France? Had he, then, preserved some connection with her? In such case, why had the captain never spoken of it to his friend? What had been Dumesnil's rôle in the catastrophe by which the chevalier's life had been wrecked?

Poor Dieudonné's imagination began to play variations upon this theme. The part taken by his dead comrade in the chevalier's separation from his wife had from time to time given birth to retrospective suspicions in his confiding heart. The present circumstance corroborated those suspicions, lending them a value they had never before possessed, and Dieudonné at once asked himself if Captain Dumesnil had always been as disinterested in his friendship as during the last years of his life. The chevalier was obliged to confess to himself that an unworthy suspicion was gnawing at his heart.

At that moment he turned his eyes toward Black.

Black was sitting at the foot of the bed, but he looked not at the invalid; he appeared, on the contrary, to be considering the chevalier with profound and meditative attention. Both melancholy and apprehension were in his look; the chevalier thought he saw remorse in the manner in which the animal dropped his eyelids from time to time, — entreaty in his humble and submissive attitude; in short, it seemed to him that the poor beast felt the crisis in which they were involved, and that he was exclaiming to himself: "*Mon Dieu!* how will poor Dieudonné endure this revelation?"

Black's countenance relieved the situation. The chevalier rose from his seat, went straight to the dog, cast himself on his knees before him, clasped him in his arms, and kissing him again and again, burst forth, as if the living Dumesnil had actually been before his eyes: —

"I forgive you, friend! I forgive you! I forget everything save the seven years of happiness and friendship that I owe to your devotion, to the care you heaped upon me in that sad ordeal. Come, don't hang your head so, brother! What the devil! we are all frail crea-

tures, easily overcome by temptation; and when all is said and done, poor mortal man as you were, it was no disgrace to yield when the angels themselves have fallen. If only you could answer me, if you could say whether it is my — whether it is your — it is our — whether it is Mathilde's child indeed!"

As if he really understood these words, the dog disengaged himself from the chevalier's embrace, went from the foot of the bed to the pillow, and there rising upon his hind feet, he began to lick the invalid's hand, which was lying outside of the covers.

This singular behavior, responding as it did to the chevalier's question, seemed to him a direct answer from Providence.

"It is indeed true!" he cried in an exaltation almost of madness; "it is you, indeed, my poor Dumesnil! and Thérèse is your child! Be tranquil, friend! I will love this child as you would have loved her had you lived; I will watch over her as you watched over me; I will consecrate my life to her happiness, and in your lowly state, my poor Black, — no, I mean to say, my poor Dumesnil, — you shall aid me as far as lies in your power. You have just rendered me one more service in showing me my duty. No, no! a hundred times no! I cannot visit upon this child's head the faults that were not hers, the doubt that weighs against my paternity. Besides," continued the chevalier, "what is it, this paternity? One word tells it all, — affection! You shall see, Dumesnil, you shall see how far mine shall go for this child!"

And just then the poor little patient, in a voice almost unintelligible, moaned the words, "A drink!" The chevalier rushed for a glass kept warm at a night-lamp, and, no longer agitated as to whether the cholera was endemic or contagious, he passed one hand under the

sick girl's head and raised it, holding the glass to her lips with the other; and while she was drinking in life, as it were, at the chevalier's hands, he, supporting her, cried: —

"Drink, Thérèse! drink, my daughter! drink, dear child of my heart!"

XXIV.

IN WHICH A LIGHT BEGINS TO PIERCE THE CLOUDS.

The Chevalier de la Graverie, abandoned as he was to his emotion, did not wish to delay one moment the fulfilment of the promise he had just made to the manes of his friend with regard to her whom he believed to be his daughter. He immediately found a successor to Marianne, and installed her without concerning himself in advance as to what might be her talent as a cook. He had taken her upon a simple recommendation that gave assurance of her being an excellent nurse. Despite the efforts of the new-comer to justify this recommendation, the chevalier did not find that her zeal, with respect to the care to be given to the young girl, rose to the height of the occasion; he assumed, accordingly, all arduous duties, and became so completely absorbed in them that, eight or ten days afterward, when Thérèse began to emerge from the torpid state in which she had lain since the terrible crisis, the chevalier, venturing for the first time to quit the bedside of the sick one to glance at his garden, observed with mingled grief and surprise that he had forgotten to prune his rose-bushes, whose rank shoots of inordinate growth must necessarily interfere with their blossoming.

During the first days, or rather during the first nights, the chevalier had with difficulty accustomed himself to the fatigue, the tension of mind, and the wakefulness rendered necessary by the poor invalid's condition; but

he soon became fond of his work, and in it discovered unknown pleasures. That struggle against death, with its uncertainties, its anxieties, its anguish, its unhoped-for joys, its sudden fears, singularly captivated this heart so long untouched by great emotions. It was a duel with a very different motive from that actuating an ordinary duel, in which a man fights to dispense death; the chevalier fought, for his part, to bestow life; with him it was not only an affair of honor, but also of conscience. When the sick girl had a relapse, the chevalier experienced a dull rage against destiny; and while it lasted, he felt his strength and courage increased a hundred-fold. He stationed himself at the poor child's bedside, defying the disease, challenging it to seize upon and destroy him; he asked himself why, in his idle boyhood, his unoccupied youth, he had never thought of studying the science of saving life, that he might owe to no one but himself, to himself alone, the life of her whom he called his child.

Then, when he had been asleep, weighed down by fatigue and by the despair in his heart, with what anxiety the chevalier would approach the bedside and study the oppressed breathing of the sick one! Never had he known satisfaction so profound as that he experienced when he found that the young girl's pulse, at first slow and irregular, had gained in steadiness and strength; that her eyes were cleared of the glassy opacity by which their brightness had been dimmed; that her lips, pale almost to lividness, were regaining a rosy tint. And then it was, with all the pride of a conqueror and in perfectly good faith, that he asked himself how there could be people in existence preferring the contemptible pleasures of egotism to the warm and ineffable joys of a self-approving conscience; and he forgot, when putting this question, that

during fifteen years he had made a religion of that egotism he anathematized.

During the long days spent at the sick girl's bedside, the Chevalier de la Graverie, undistracted by anything save the care he must give her, reflected at length on his position and that of his young ward. His indolence of spirit and his dread of the disagreeable were such that for fifteen years he had never troubled himself with thinking. He remembered well having delivered to his brother the power of attorney demanded by the latter for the purpose of securing the chevalier's divorce from his wife; but that did not in the least explain how Mathilde had decided to abandon her child. Since his conjugal misfortunes, the chevalier, not unmindful of the part played by his brother, had always felt a keen repugnance to meeting that elder brother; and since his return to France it was only at long intervals that he had had news of him; and he now hesitated to demand of him enlightenment as to what had happened, after his departure, touching the destinies of Madame de la Graverie.

Very slowly Thérèse recovered her health. After the terrible shock the physical system receives from cholera, either the health becomes re-established very rapidly, so that there is as immediate a return from sickness to health as there was passage from health to sickness, or else convalescence languishes and prolongs the fears that have been felt for the patient's life. The young girl was in the latter state. Her condition complicated the situation; and she continued so feeble that the doctor each day warned the chevalier to avoid causing her the least excitement, since it could result only in the most serious consequences for Thérèse.

Yet Dieudonné was very impatient to question Thérèse; twenty times had he begun a query that must have led to

a confidence, and twenty times had he stammeringly arrested it.

At last the young girl was able to sit up; she was placed near the window in the chevalier's great arm-chair. With the voluptuousness to be observed in all invalids, she absorbed the keen and penetrating warmth of the sun to which she was exposed; and the breeze, perfumed by the garden roses, caressed the blond locks that escaped from under her little cap. From time to time she turned to look at Monsieur de la Graverie, who, standing behind her, with both hands resting on her chair, was affectionately regarding her; she in return pressed his hand and kissed it with an impulsiveness at once child-like and grateful. She then fell into a deep revery, her eyes wandering over the garden, whose clumps of roses were enamelled with a thousand flowers of different hues.

The chevalier bent over her. "Of what are you thinking, Thérèse?" he asked.

"My answer will seem very silly, Monsieur le Chevalier," responded the young girl, "but I am thinking of nothing; and yet, I was quite content in my revery. Ask me what I look at when I am looking at the sky, and I should say the same thing; I look at nothing; and yet my eyes would be fixed upon the greatest, the most beautiful, the most incomprehensible thing in the world. No, I feel ineffably content. It seems to me that I have been transported to another world very different from the one in which I have lived until now, and in which I have suffered so much. Here, all is great, all is good, as, also, all is beautiful!"

"Dear little one!" murmured the chevalier, wiping away a tear that ran from the corner of his eye.

"Alas!" continued Thérèse, not having seen the tear,

and turning to the chevalier with a tone profoundly sad, "why did you arouse me? This happiness, like all happiness here below, is only a dream; but the dream is so sweet, and the awakening so sad!"

"Have you anything or any one to complain of, my child? Do you find our care insufficient? Speak! Surely, you must have discerned by this time that the desire to see you happy has become my sole thought."

"Do you love me, then?" asked the child, with a charming naïveté.

"If you had not inspired me with a profound and sincere affection, should I be for you what I am, — or, rather, what I try to be, Thérèse?"

"But how and why can you love me?"

The chevalier hesitated a moment before replying. "Because you recall my daughter," said he.

"Your daughter?" asked Thérèse; "then you have lost her, monsieur? Oh, I am sorry for you, then! for I think if God should take away the child he has sent to console me in my wretchedness, nothing could bind me to this world, in which I resign myself to remaining only in anticipating the tenderness and love that in future is awaiting me from this dear little being."

It was the first time she had spoken of her condition, and she did it with an ease that was not of immodesty, but which, nevertheless, appeared strange to Monsieur de la Graverie. He considered it best to turn the conversation, and he thought the moment favorable for interrogating Thérèse upon her past.

"Then you have been unhappy, poor little child?" he asked.

"Oh, yes! so unhappy that I have often asked myself if the God of the poor were the same as the God of the rich. I am very young yet, am I not, since I am not

yet nineteen? Ah, well, I think there has not been one form of misery sent upon earth that I have not known."

"But your family?"

"My family, all I have known of it at least, was composed of one poor old woman who could only suffer, as I did, and who suffered with me. Oh, well did she perform her task on earth!"

"She was — your mother?" inquired the chevalier, with emotion.

"She called me her daughter; but now that I am old enough to reflect, I do not think she could have been my mother, — she was too old for that. Besides, when I shut my eyes and search deep in my memory, I see far off, as in a dream, an early childhood, which was not at all like that I knew with Mother Denniée."

"And what do your recollections tell you of that time?" eagerly questioned the chevalier. "Tell me, oh, tell me, Thérèse! You cannot know, you cannot understand, what value I attach to what you are about to relate; for I do not doubt, my child, that you have enough confidence in me to tell me all you know."

"Alas! monsieur, I ask nothing better than to tell you all; but I recall nothing very exactly, only I am quite certain that I was not always covered with the rags I have worn in my youth. I recall especially that when we passed the Tuileries my adopted mother always had to console me; for I wept and begged her to let me go, as in my earlier childhood, and play with the hoop and rope under the chestnut-trees."

"And is not a single one of the faces seen in early childhood engraved upon your memory?"

"Not one! Nor do I recall when or how I passed from ease and wealth to the garret where Mother Denniée lived. I lived there very unhappily for ten years; but

let it pass, monsieur! She was good, however, poor woman; she loved me as well as the poor can love. For when all is said, monsieur, misery shrivels up the heart sadly; and when there is no bread, when for twenty-four hours hunger has knocked at your door, and, looking about, you find yourself without resources, without hope, — when God is so hard to his children, it is indeed difficult for them to be kind to others! And at the times when no work was to be had, when we were forced to beg at the door of some restaurant of the Barrière de Vaugirard, and I failed to excite sympathy on my way, Mother Denniée would sometimes beat me. But that did not last; her anger yielded to my first tears. She would ask forgiveness while she kissed me; I wept with her, and for a few seconds we would forget our wretchedness."

"And how did you come to leave your adopted mother, dear child?"

"Alas! I did not leave her, monsieur; it was she who left me, for a better world than ours. I was fifteen years old in the last days of her illness; she so constantly exhorted me to courage, virtue, and resignation that, when I had accompanied her to her last resting-place, when I had seen her laid in a pauper's grave near her old and tried companions, and had offered up a fervent prayer to the good God, I arose stronger and better than I had ever felt. In spite of my youth I had already foreseen the dangers awaiting me in my loneliness, and, being neither able nor willing to brave them, I resolved to flee them. I went to some nuns, who took me as an apprentice. Unfortunately, in a short time, I became a very skilful workwoman."

"Why, what was there unfortunate in that, poor little one?"

Thérèse buried her face in her hands.

"Come, come! speak," said the chevalier, in the most encouraging tone.

"Surely, I must tell you," answered the child; "and you who are good, who are forgiving, will pardon, on your part and that of the world, a poor, desolate girl. You say that you wish to be as a father to me; you, above all, then, must know the truth, that you may understand your adopted daughter. Then, it seems to me, when I have told you all, when you know how to excuse my fault, I shall be more at ease with you."

"Speak, my child, and rest assured of my indulgence. Both it and my tenderness for you will agree to spare you whatever is too painful in this confession."

"Oh, yes, yes! do not fear, you shall know all," replied Thérèse, extending to the chevalier her hand, which he took in a fatherly way between his own.

"At seventeen, as I said before, I had become the cleverest worker in the shop, and I was placed with one of the best linen-drapers in the Rue St. Honoré.

"One day a young man, accompanied by his father, presented himself at Madame Dubois', — that was the name of the person in whose house I was employed, — to order some things which were to figure among the wedding-presents that he was offering to his *fiancée;* I can say nothing of his father, I saw only the young man. At first glance, he had not an especially remarkable exterior. Why could I not keep my eyes from him? That is what I cannot tell, unless I set it down to fate. It seemed to me, too, that his eyes were devouring me; and during the remainder of that day and a great part of the night, which I passed sleeplessly, I was very much disturbed.

"The next day he returned, under the pretext of add-

ing some orders to those he had made on the preceding day; and this time it seemed to me that he gazed at me with more intentness than before. That second day I was very much troubled, and scarcely dared raise my eyes to him. The instant he placed his hand on the door-knob to enter the room where I was, although I had not seen him and no one had said it was he, I felt my heart stand still; then, upon facing him, a sort of flame coursed through my veins, and my pulses throbbed for the rest of the day. He came again the next day, and then the day after; he was so gentle, so kind, that the vague, indefinable feeling which I had experienced from the first did not hesitate to take on a more determined character. I knew that I loved him; and the infatuation impelling me toward him was so imperative that I never for a single moment reflected that in a few days he would bestow his name and hand upon another, who perhaps already had his heart. However, I wished to know what she was like.

"I was the overseer of the shop in the absence of the mistress of the place. One day, when she was out on business, I put some things into a box, and, going out, I made my way to the hôtel where I knew lived the *fiancée* of the man whom I so desperately loved. I asked for Mademoiselle Adèle de Clermont; that was her name. I was kept waiting a long time. Every sound of the bell rung from without thrilled my heart, for I always thought it was he.

"Finally I was taken to the young girl. She was about twenty-four years of age; she was tall, dark, and spare; she had a haughty air and ill-tempered face. My heart thrilled with joy. Henri could not love that woman. I pretended to take some measurements; then I went away overcome with deep emotion.

"I was about to descend the last flight of stairs, when my hand, which grasped the rail, encountered another hand. I looked up and saw Henri. His preoccupation probably equalled mine, for neither of us had perceived the other. He spoke first.

"'You here, mademoiselle?' cried he.

"'Oh, forgive me, pardon me!' said I, 'but I wanted to see her!'

"With these words I fell into his arms. He folded me to his heart, his lips sought mine; and it seemed to me, demented as I was, that this embrace, sealed by a kiss, had united us with an inseverable tie.

"The next day we walked together in the Bois de Boulogne. He said that he loved me, and I confessed that I loved him. For a fortnight these walks were renewed every evening. That was the happiest time of my life; poor lonely soul that I was, having no one to tell me whether I was doing right or wrong, I opened my heart to the moment and closed my eyes to the future. In my love for him I did not ask what he intended to do. I lived from day to day, contenting myself with the joy of seeing him, drinking in the sound of his voice, not dreaming for an instant that this rapture could ever have an end.

"One day he did not come. I went home half frantic with anxiety; there I found a note from Henri. This letter contained his farewell. He wrote that at the moment of breaking with his *fiancée*, courage had failed him; that the thought of dishonoring a young girl by the scandal of such a rupture just when they were to have been married, had triumphed over his love; that he could not cease to be a man of honor; that he should be unhappy all his life with the thought that I might have been his; and he begged me to forget him, that I might not suffer for his misfortune and mine.

"Alas! I could not forget.

"I asked who had brought this letter. They told me it was a young man about twenty-five, in military dress, who looked so much like Henri that they had thought at first it was he. The intervention of this young officer added mystery to the affair. But the letter that I held in my hand was real enough. I had read it and re-read it, and the handwriting was indeed his own. It was like my death-warrant; little did it matter to me who had brought it!

"After I had read that fatal letter the world was a blank; it seemed to me that, like a ghost, I was wandering in a vast cemetery strewn with graves. Each one of these enclosed a remembrance of him. I stopped at every mound and wept. It was like a dream.

"When I came out of the strange illusion it was broad daylight, — hateful day. I wondered how the sun could still shine over the earth when Henri loved me no longer; how could men and women go on living, singing, occupying themselves with indifferent matters, while my heart was so desolate! I resolved to fly from the noise, the confusion, the life of Paris, which was breaking my heart. I set off like one demented, without thought of where I was going.

"Where I went, however, was where I had been with him. Mechanically and instinctively, without feeling the jostling of the crowd, I took my way to the Bois de Boulogne, whither, for the last fifteen days, he had taken me every evening. I wandered around a long time, pausing now and again at some place where we had lingered together. It seemed to me that the wind, rustling through the leaves, rehearsed again the words of love to which I had so joyously listened. A sudden thrill would seize me as I thought I heard his voice calling; I would

stop, thinking that I recognized his footprints in the dust; at the approach of any man who was still too far off for recognition, I fancied that I saw him.

"Thus, for the greater part of the day, I wandered about. I had eaten nothing since the night before, nor did I think of eating; a burning fever sustained me. Little by little, despair took the place of these fancies which were only the last struggles of hope. I thought less about him and more about myself. I began to consider the desolation in which I was left, — somewhat as a wanderer, lost in the desert, scans the insuperable horizon. It was clear enough that nothing could save me or console me, or restore light and happiness to life; overcome by grief, fatigue, and want of sleep, I sank upon the turf under a tree, in an unfrequented spot and fainted.

"When I regained consciousness I found myself no longer alone; a black dog was sitting there regarding me kindly. Again and again, from the distance I heard some one calling 'Black!' but the dog turned his head as if to say, 'You may call, but I shall not go.' As for me, I had not strength either to drive him away or to detain him. I only stared at him in a dull way, for I had not yet regained my full senses; finally, I became afraid, and put out my hand to keep him away, but he licked it so fondly that I understood he intended me no harm. I arose, and so did he. Memory came back, and I began with the present only to return to the past.

"'Henri! Henri! Henri!'

"Each time that I repeated the name my misfortune became more real and more grievous. I asked myself whether I, an orphan, a young girl without means, loving but unloved, could yet live, when to love and be loved seemed the whole of life? My heart answered no. Then

I began to long for that other world, of which the soul, the spirit, and the essence is universal love. In that better world, God, who had placed in my heart such unspeakable tenderness for Henri, surely could not refuse to reunite us. I determined to go to that world of souls and await him, that I might be the first he would meet on entering.

"I took my bearings. I had reached Neuilly. Through the twilight I could see the black outlines of the tall poplars that border the Seine. The river, death, was merely two steps away; God had heard me.

"I hastened in that direction as promptly as if I had long before decided upon my course. The dog followed; but I paid him no attention. I seemed almost to have lost the significance of surrounding objects; I do not know how they appeared to my eyes, but they reached my mind only in a sort of vision. I suddenly stopped; there was the river, — a sullen water, rolling fast. I was so intent upon quitting life that I should instantly have plunged headlong in, but for a sudden thought of the God before whom I was about to appear.

"Down on my knees I fell, at the river's brink; my bosom opened itself, so to speak, in order that my heart and soul might go straight to God. I showed him that although he gives every human being a cross to bear, he had made mine too heavy for my weak shoulders; and, falling, crushed under its weight, I could carry it no farther. I prayed him to smooth my last step from life to death, to receive me into his bosom, and, above all, to preserve in Henri's heart a germ of love for me that might be transplanted to flourish above.

"I rose, as much at peace as if God himself had reached me his hand. Then, taking one step and closing my eyes, I leaped into the river. I felt myself received,

enfolded, and swathed, as in a watery winding-sheet. But in the midst of the rumbling of the water as it surged over my head I seemed to hear the shock of a second body from above. Almost instantly my dress was violently pulled. I was afraid, though my resolution was strong enough, oh, so afraid of death! Once in the water I had opened my eyes, and its slimy depth seemed awful. Being thus seized, I thought that the cold hand of Death was dragging me down. I opened my mouth to cry out, and was choked with water; some bluish lights flashed before my sight, and I lost consciousness.

"It must have been a long time after that when I began to hear human voices about me; filled with the idea of death, I felt that I had reached the world so ardently wished for. Reason at last returned, and I made a tremendous effort to open my eyes. I was in a low room of one of those public houses to be found along the banks of the Seine; I had been laid on a mattress placed upon a table. I thought I must be dreaming still. But there, outstretched upon his paws, and before the fire that lighted the room, lay the black dog, licking his wet coat with his tongue. Then I understood that I had been rescued. I recalled by degrees all that had passed, one thing after another. Very faintly I said a word that came into my memory, — it was a dog's name: —

"'Black.'

"Had he heard me? Did he merely divine it? In either case, be got up and came to me. I felt the touch of his warm tongue on my cold hand. This was my first sensation from without. I moved and gave a sigh. Some people in the room approached and stood around me. One made me swallow a few drops of warm wine, and another propped me up against a mass of pillows.

Then all began to speak at once, and I soon learned what had happened.

"Attracted first by the howling of a dog, and then by the splashing sound of two bodies falling into the water, the good people that lived in this house had run to the river's edge; there they saw the black dog, who had brought me to the surface of the water, but not being strong enough to climb the bank with his burden, was floating with the stream. As we were only a few yards from the shore, a sailor had plunged into the river and brought me to land. The rest explained itself.

"Just then an officer entered, either a commissary of police or a justice, I do not know which. He had just heard of the incident and hastened to learn the facts. He found me alive, and, after giving me some fatherly advice, he exacted a promise that I would never again attempt to take my life.

"They warmed a bed, and put me into it. I did not leave those kind people until the next day. I was drawing my little stock of money from my pocket that I might pay them, not for the service rendered, but for the expense I had occasioned. At the first movement that I made, the man laid his hand on my arm. I pressed the kind man's hand, and embraced his wife. Then I entered a *fiacre* that had been ordered from Neuilly, taking good care to see that my rescuer, Black, was with me, and I went back to Paris.

"But my frequent absences during the last fortnight, and that of the day before, had angered Madame Dubois, and she informed me that my place was filled. I determined to leave Paris; Paris had become hateful to me. While at Madame Dubois', I had had business relations with Mademoiselle Francotte, of Chartres. She had told me, if I should ever think of going into the provinces,

to remember her. I mounted a Chartres diligence, followed by Black, and, seeking her out, I at once secured a place in her shop."

"But Henri, what of Henri?" cried the chevalier. "Have you had no news of him? Has the wretch abandoned you in such a strait?"

"Henri? Oh, no, monsieur! he loved me far too well not to respect me. I was unharmed, in spite of my strong affection, — for, indeed, I could have denied him nothing! He asked no more than the innocent caresses that I so gladly lavished."

"But," demanded the astonished chevalier, "how, with such an ardent love in your heart, could you so soon forget him?"

"Alas, monsieur!" replied Thérèse, shaking her head, "it is just my love for him that has ruined me; you do not yet know the half of my misfortunes."

"Go on, then, dear child, finish your story, — unless, indeed, you do not feel strong enough to continue the sad disclosures."

Thérèse continued: "A few days after my arrival at Chartres, having been sent to deliver a box in the city, I was walking along with bowed head when I found myself running against two officers, who, for sport, barred my way, having clasped hands to form a chain across my path. Raising my head and glancing at one of the two, I cried out, —

"'Henri!'

"I was forced to lean against the wall for support. On seeing me so pale and so near fainting, the young men began to apologize, not dreaming, said the one on whom my gaze was fixed, that a harmless pleasantry could have occasioned such distress. But I, more and more under the influence of an illusion, only repeated in trembling tones, —

"'Henri! Henri! Henri!"

"'Mademoiselle,' said the officer, at length, 'I am sorry not to be able to call myself Henri, since the name recalls such tender memories, but that is my brother's name; mine is Gratien. Most happy shall I be if my name also lingers in your thoughts.'

"'If you are not Henri, then, pray let me pass, monsieur.'

"Black growled angrily, and seemed ready to spring at the officers.

"'Mademoiselle,' said Gratien, 'we had not intended to detain you.'

"His companion spoke: 'Meeting, as we did, a young lady with downcast eyes, we merely said to each other, Gratien and I, that such a beautiful girl must be possessed of beautiful eyes, and we obstructed your path to make you lift your eyes. You have done so, and we are fully satisfied, mademoiselle; they are really more beautiful than we could have supposed.'

"So saying, the young officer twirled his moustache with such an insolent air that I was frightened.

"'Messieurs!' I cried, 'messieurs!'

"Several people drew near, attracted, doubtless, by my affrighted voice.

"'What are you doing to this child?' demanded an old gentleman with a moustache.

"'Nothing, absolutely nothing,' jocosely replied Monsieur Gratien's friend.

"'In my time, messieurs, when I had the honor to wear the uniform, we offered young ladies only such compliments as they could receive without growing pale and without calling for assistance.' Then turning to me, he said, 'Take my arm, child, and come away.'

"After going fifty yards, the old man spoke to me: —

"'Have you further need of me, mademoiselle? Do you think my protection necessary any longer?'

"'No, monsieur,' said I, 'and I thank you with all my heart.'

"Then, as if he could have followed my thoughts, I added: 'Oh, it all came from his resembling Henri so much!'

"The amazed old gentleman looked after me as if he thought I must be mad!"

XXV.

A SURPRISE.

"Upon returning to the shop of Mademoiselle Francotte," continued Thérèse, "I pleaded a violent headache, and asked permission to retire a little while to the back shop. I wished to collect myself. My face was so white that no one for a moment doubted my indisposition. Mademoiselle Francotte herself wished to be of service, so I begged her to give me a glass of water and to leave me alone. She did as I requested.

"Once alone, I began to reflect. I recalled the letter that had been brought to Madame Dubois', when I was absent, by an officer who had so resembled Henri that they had thought it was he. Then the young officer's remark recurred to me: —

"'My name is not Henri, it is my brother's name.'

"I remembered, too, that once or twice Henri had spoken of a twin brother who was almost his image; they were so alike, that in their early childhood their parents were obliged to have them dressed in different colors, in order to distinguish them one from the other. That explained everything. Gratien had come home for Henri's marriage, and Henri had sent him, his dearest friend, to bring the letter that had so nearly caused my death. The marriage over, Gratien had rejoined his company at Chartres. I had met him that morning, and had mistaken him for Henri. Nothing could be simpler. But, in my present mood of mind and heart, everything became a menace.

"Just then I heard the street door open and shut, and, through the double glass doors that separated me from the main shop, I saw an officer enter; it was Gratien. He wished to buy some gloves. Piqued by his adventure, apparently, he had followed me, or had made inquiries, and the glove purchase was merely a pretext to find out who I was.

"Trembling, I leaned upon a chest of drawers, whose marble cooled my hot hands. He lingered nearly a quarter of an hour in the shop under various pretences; then, casting a disappointed glance around, he went away.

"Gratien's loitering in the shop did not surprise Mademoiselle Francotte, however, for she had four or five young girls, none more than twenty years of age, whom these gentlemen of the garrison came to see, under the pretext of ordering shirts or gloves. Mademoiselle Francotte found it to her advantage, and counselled us to two things, — pleasant faces and sweet smiles in the shop, austerity everywhere else.

"Now that my mind was clear, I no longer had any reason for remaining in the back room; coming out, I took my accustomed place behind the counter. The girls were all talking about the fine-looking officer who had just gone. It was his first visit, and you can imagine what things four tongues, from fifteen to eighteen years old, could say concerning a handsome young man of twenty-five. They thought I was much to be pitied for not having seen him; but, undoubtedly, we should see him again: he had remained a quarter of an hour; he must have had some design in staying so long.

"I listened to this chatter with averted eyes, and without adding a word. I alone could have thrown light on the subject, but my mouth remained studiously closed.

"The next day I was sent out again, and fearfully I

ventured forth. I was afraid I should encounter Monsieur Gratien; at the same time, I was dying to meet him, so that we could talk of Henri, — a privilege for which my poor heart yearned.

"Hardly had I gone a hundred steps when I met the young officer. I stood rooted to the spot. He drew near and began speaking: —

"'Mademoiselle, will you allow me to apologize for the fright my comrade and I gave you? I did not wait until to-day, however, for when I learned in what shop you were I made bold to present myself there. But you were away; and, not knowing your name, and afraid of being indiscreet, I dared not inquire for you. I am grateful to the chance that brings me your way, and that permits me to say how sorry I am to have impressed you so disagreeably yesterday.'

"'Monsieur,' I replied, 'you are wrong. My behavior, of the real source of which you are ignorant, arose from a different feeling.'

"'How, mademoiselle?' interrupted Gratien, 'can I be so happy as —'

"I stopped him. 'Monsieur, an explanation is necessary. I will not avoid it, although it was not of my seeking. You are Monsieur Gratien?'

"'I am.'

"'And the brother of Monsieur Henri?' I continued.

"'Assuredly.'

"'You were in Paris at the time of your brother's marriage with Adèle de Clermont?'

"'Yes.'

"'You were commissioned by him to take a letter to a young girl whom he had loved —'

"'Whom he loves still, and will always love,' interposed Gratien.

"'Ah!' I cried, grasping his hands and bursting into sobs, 'do you speak the truth?'

"'*Mon Dieu!*' exclaimed Gratien, 'are you Thérèse?'

"'Alas! monsieur —'

"'The poor child that tried to drown herself?'

"'You knew that?'

"'Yes, from him. He heard of it. He went to Madame Dubois'; but they did not know where you had gone, nor what had become of you. How rejoiced he will be to know that you are still alive, and that you do not curse him!'

"'I love him too well ever to curse him,' I answered.

"'Then let me give him this assurance.'

"'Henri knows my heart, and, I hope, has no need of assurance.'

"'No matter! To-morrow he shall know that you are here, and that I have seen you.'

"I sighed while wiping away my tears.

"'But once seeing you is not enough. I must see you again. You love Henri?'

"'Oh, with all my soul!'

"'Well, we will talk about him.'

"'I must no longer talk of him, monsieur, nor must I continue to love him.'

"'One can always love a brother; we will talk about him as if he were a brother.'

"'Ah! don't tempt me,' I answered; 'I am only too disposed to do so. To forget is impossible, but let me at least be silent.'

"'The only consolation of an irreparable misfortune is in weeping and repining. Confide in me, and weep with me. I will tell you how much he loves you, how he has fought, how he has struggled and suffered; I will tell you, above all, how he loves you still.'

"'Oh, stop! stop!' I cried, putting my hands over my ears that I might not hear.

"'Yes, you are right; we will not recall such memories here in the middle of the street. I will do myself the honor to call on you, Mademoiselle, and I hope that you will do me the favor to receive me.'

"With a bow he turned away before I could answer.

"Thinking deeply over this interview, I returned to Mademoiselle Francotte's. I was frightened at my intense desire to see Gratien again merely to talk of Henri, and it became evident that I must avoid this irresistible temptation. Consequently, I asked Mademoiselle Francotte if she could not give me lodgings with her, offering, in that case, to take less pay; but, unfortunately, her whole house was occupied, and Mademoiselle could not grant my request.

"In the Rue de Grand-Cerf, I had a little room on the third floor, to which I went every evening about nine o'clock, which was as soon as the shop closed. Sunday afternoons I was free.

"How Gratien had obtained my address I do not know; but that same evening, when I returned home, I found him standing in front of the house in which I lodged. I am telling you everything, monsieur; it is my confession. My feelings, my very thoughts as well as my actions I am revealing to you.

"Ah, well, it was less with a sensation of fear than of joy that I recognized Gratien! It is true that I could not repress a movement as if to spring toward him. He saw it, and from that moment, undoubtedly, knew the strength of his power over me. He straightway began with some words that would have taken away all my courage, even had it been in my power to check him.

"'Upon leaving you to-day, mademoiselle, I wrote to

Henri saying that I had seen you, and that you still love him. I shall have an answer by day after to-morrow.'

"'Ah, monsieur! why revive such memories; why recall this love? You torture me.' And, leaning against the doorway, I began to weep.

"'Mademoiselle,' returned he, 'I will not insist to-day; your agitation warns me that I must be more discreet. But on the day after to-morrow, Sunday, as soon as Mademoiselle Francotte's shop is closed, I shall have the honor to present myself here again.'

"'Oh, monsieur!' I cried, 'what will be said if you come here? It is impossible, quite impossible!'

"'Be reassured, mademoiselle; as luck will have it, our major lives in the same house. Duty, as well as friendship, brings me to his rooms every day. He is on the second floor, while you are on the third; if I come out of his rooms and ascend to yours, no one will be the wiser. They see me go out; I have been with Monsieur Lingard, where I have just reported. No one can find fault with that.'

"And again, without waiting for a reply, Gratien raised his hat respectfully and withdrew.

"My night was one of long sleeplessness, and the next day one long waiting. I was impatient for the coming of Gratien as I had once been when I expected Henri, and it was really for Henri that I now waited. Ten minutes after twelve saw me at home, and at half-past there was a gentle rap at my door.

"'Has he answered?' I demanded, even while opening the door.

"'There it is,' said he, presenting a folded letter; 'read it, and you will see whether I was wrong in saying that he still loves you.'

"Eagerly I took the letter, and ran to the window, not

so much to see it as to be alone. While reading, I heard Black growl threateningly, and two or three times I tried to silence him ; but for the first time, he would not heed.

" Yes, the letter, unfortunately, was very like what Gratien had promised. Henri still loved only me. He was unhappy, and regretted not having had courage enough to break off the match that caused him so much unhappiness. When I had read and re-read Henri's letter, I handed it back to Gratien.

" 'Oh, keep it, mademoiselle; the letter is not really meant for me, but for you. What should I do with it?' And he put back my hand with a sigh. Pressing the letter to my lips, I then hid it in my bosom.

" Gratien having remained standing, I made him a sign to be seated. He understood then that the only means of prolonging his visit was to talk of Henri. An hour rolled away like a minute. Gratien then took his leave, for at two o'clock was the parade. I was on the point of asking when he would come again, but happily I restrained myself.

" After Gratien left I bolted my door, as if afraid of being disturbed, though I had no visitors save occasionally one of Mademoiselle Francotte's girls. Once alone, I sat down on a little sofa near the window, and, with Black's head resting on my knees and his great human eyes looking up at me, I began to read my letter again.

" You see, do you not, that this occupied the whole day? On the next day I did not see Gratien at all. In the evening I heard ten, eleven, twelve o'clock sound without going to bed. I waited. I could not believe that I was to go through the evening without talking of Henri. Again turning to the letter, I read and re-read it, and, at last, fell asleep with it on my heart.

"The whole of the next day passed, and still no Gratien. Returning home, I hoped to find him at my door, but he was not there. I went up to my room and lighted my candle. I was reading Henri's letter for the hundredth time, when Black growled; then I knew even before hearing his step that Gratien was coming.

A moment later there was a knocking on the door.

"'Come in!' I cried, with an agitation that Gratien could easily have misjudged. 'Ah!' I exclaimed, on the impulse of the moment, 'why did you not come yesterday?' I went no farther, but, unfortunately, I had gone too far.

"'I did not dare,' he answered. 'You manifested some fear as to the frequency of my visits, which I understood perfectly, however exaggerated. But I wished to prove that I could be devoted without being imprudent.'

"I lowered my eyes, feeling that it was necessary to be in my position to understand the motives by which I was actuated. At the same time I made him a sign to take a seat near me.

"That evening passed in a second, seemingly; as before, Gratien spoke only of Henri. Midnight sounded when it seemed to me that Gratien had been there only a few minutes. I descended the stairs to open the door for him myself, for, as he was not in the habit of going away so late from Monsieur Lingard's, I was afraid a question put to the servants might disclose all. As it is the custom in the province for each lodger to have his key, so I had mine, and could let Gratien out without his being either seen or heard.

"Now, what I have just related is the story of three months of my life. The first month, to do Gratien justice, there was absolutely nothing said of any one but Henri. The second month he hazarded a few words for

himself. I know, indeed, that at these first words I should have stopped him, and if he resumed, my door should have been closed to him. But remember that I was alone, with no one to counsel me, and I had, besides, the example of all my companions, whose superior I was not, either in rank or fortune. The vague memories of an early childhood, bright and happy, which had glowed like a far-off dawn during my first youth, had grown fainter and fainter day by day. I knew what one suffers from love, and I pitied Gratien for loving me. When with him I felt perfectly sure of myself, having also a faithful guardian in Black. Neither at home nor on the promenade did I allow the dog to leave me an instant; and very soon I had him trained to a little manœuvre that upset every plan of Gratien's. But one evening Black left me."

The Chevalier de la Graverie shuddered; for he saw at the outset the consequences to the poor girl of his seizure of Black. His hand sought hers, and he raised it repentantly to his lips.

"Continue," he murmured; for the young girl, astonished at the action and at the expression of his face, had paused to look at him.

"Well, I was telling you that one evening my dog left me. I was in despair at his loss. Gratien seemed also to be sorry, and made a search, at least so he said. I hunted near and far, much to the dissatisfaction of Mademoiselle Francotte; but I preferred risking her displeasure to losing Black. It seemed to me that while my guardian and protector remained unfound, I was in some imminent peril.

"One evening, about six o'clock, I received a letter, in the unrecognized handwriting of a woman, and signed 'A Sincere Friend.' It was couched in these terms: —

"MADEMOISELLE THÉRÈSE, — I am told that you have lost a dog which you prize highly, — a black spaniel, with a white spot on his throat. My husband found one just eight days ago, and the description is the same. Would you like to assure yourself this evening whether the dog is yours? If so, though we shall be sorry to part with him, we will return him to his lawful owner.

"I have the honor to be

"Yours, etc.,

"A SINCERE FRIEND.

"RUE ST. MICHEL, No. 17 Second Floor.

"I uttered a cry of joy, and, without any explanations, I snatched my shawl and set off.

"I soon reached the Rue St. Michel, ascended to the second floor of No. 17, and rang the bell. An old woman opened the door.

"'A Sincere Friend?' I inquired.

"'Are you Mademoiselle Thérèse?'

"'Yes.'

"'Do you come to inquire about a dog?'

"'Yes.'

"'Very well; please enter this room. I will tell madame.' She opened a door.

"I had been there barely five minutes before another door was opened. I looked around at the sound. A single word escaped my lips, —

"'Henri!'

"And I threw myself into the arms of the man who had opened the door.

"The next morning found me still in his arms, but I was weeping in despair. Gratien, knowing well that he could win nothing from me, since his brother had all my love, — Gratien, whom I had constantly seen in uniform, had assumed his brother's clothes (the clothes that he

was wearing the last time I saw him), and had come to me dressed thus. At the very sight my strength abandoned me, and my love alone possessed and disposed of me. The resemblance between the twins was so great that I had been deceived. It was only the next morning that Gratien confessed all."

"Oh, the miscreant!" cried the Chevalier de la Graverie.

"He had not acted from his own designs, but at the promptings of another, — a friend named Louville."

"I know him!" cried the chevalier. "Proceed, my child, proceed!"

XXVI.

IN WHICH THE CHEVALIER FORMS A RESOLUTION.

Thérèse continued her narrative. The remainder of the story, as simple as it was sad, we shall relate in a very few words.

Gratien, incapable himself of such criminal strategy, had been inspired by Louville. The regiment had received orders to move. Louville had made it appear to Gratien that it would be a reflection on his honor if he left Chartres without having been accepted as the lover of Thérèse. The two young men then laid a plot which had ensnared the poor child.

For twenty-four hours Thérèse was affected by a sort of insanity, in which her experience in Paris was confounded in her mind with what had occurred in Chartres. When she finally came to her senses, she found the old woman beside her, the one that had opened the door and led her to that fatal room. The old woman told her that she could remain in that apartment, for which the rent was paid for a year, and of which all the furniture was her own. Moreover, a letter and a sum of money had been left by Gratien for her.

Thérèse could at first make nothing of what was being said to her; sounds she heard, but they were indistinct and meaningless. Gradually the truth dawned on her mind and she understood: the regiment had left on the day before, and Gratien had gone with it. She was deserted! In exchange for her stolen honor they had left

her a room, some furniture, some money! The poor child, crying out with shame and grief, sprang out of bed, and, dressing in all haste, she pushed away the woman, the letter, and the money, and fled from the house.

But what could she do then? She could think of nothing. Return to Mademoiselle Francotte's? No! What could she say? How could she explain her absence and her return? Could she present any reason for her melancholy? She searched her pocket — thirty or forty francs were there; it was her entire fortune. She thought again of death; but the courage which had sustained her in her first attempt at suicide abandoned her completely in the second. She walked on at random, sometimes leaning against a wall, her face so pale that passers-by paused to ask, —

"What is the matter, child?"

"Nothing!" Thérèse answered briefly, and turned to walk on. They felt the grief underlying this response, and respectfully let her pass. True sorrow has its majesty.

She continued her way in a halting fashion, without seeing or knowing whither she went. At last she reached the Faubourg de la Grappe. The pent-up tears now urging release, Thérèse cast about for a quiet place where she could weep unnoticed. She opened a gate close at hand, and entered a dingy alley, narrow and damp. She was barely within when her tears found an outlet, and she wept freely. It was high time, for her heart was almost breaking.

How many hours Thérèse remained there weeping, she could not have told. She had felt weak, and, looking for a place to sit down, had come upon a stairway, and dropped upon the first step. She was aroused from this torpor by a touch on her shoulder. Beside

her was an old woman, who lived in the house; returning late, she had distinguished a heap that seemed in the half-light to shape itself into the form of a human body. Thérèse lifted her head without thinking, to wipe away the tears that coursed down her beautiful face.

Such genuine grief could not fail to touch the old woman's heart. She asked the child what she was doing, what she wanted, and if there was anything that she herself could do for her. Thérèse uttered a half-truth. She did embroidery at a linen-draper's she said, and had lost her place and was now looking for a lodging.

That all seemed true enough, though it was a great display of grief for so small a misfortune.

"Can you do fine work?" the old woman asked.

For reply Thérèse pointed to her own embroidered collar that she had made. It was a masterpiece.

"Excellent!" replied the old woman; "when one can do such things with her needle there is no cause for anxiety; you will not die of hunger."

Thérèse said nothing.

"You are wanting a room?" the woman continued.

This time Thérèse nodded.

"Very well, there is one in this house; it is furnished, and is not dear. It is not fine, though; but for eighteen francs a month one cannot expect a palace. Only, the first half must be paid in advance, — nine francs."

Thérèse drew from her pocket two five-franc pieces. "There it is," she said.

"But you do not know whether you will be suited," protested the good woman.

"I shall be suited," Thérèse responded.

"Well, then, come with me."

She went before, and Thérèse followed. They stopped

on the second floor, for the owner lived there. The bargain was soon closed. The only question ever asked the tenants was, "Can you pay in advance?" Upon their answering, "Yes," they were welcomed.

Ten minutes later Thérèse was installed in the garret where she had been found by the Chevalier de la Graverie.

The same day, taking the remainder of her money, saving enough to buy her food for a week, she purchased, through the old woman, some needles and embroidery cotton. As to her patterns, she was accustomed to design them herself. On the following day the good old woman set out with a collar and a pair of cuffs embroidered by Thérèse; she returned with ten francs. Thérèse gave her two francs as commission. The poor child had calculated that she could live on twenty-five sous a day and save up three francs. Therefore, as the old woman had said, she need have no anxiety on that score.

Thus a month passed. During this time Thérèse had been able to lay aside fifty francs. However, for some days past the old woman had talked to her in a peculiar manner. First, she began to hint that it was very easy for beautiful young girls to become rich, and that it was foolishness for her to wear out her young eyes working in a garret; next, the old woman complained of not being able to sell as readily as in the beginning, — the demand had fallen off by half. To all these complaints Thérèse listened indifferently; if her income decreased by half, she would still have enough to live upon.

At last, one evening, the old woman explained herself more clearly; she spoke of a young man who had seen Thérèse and had fallen in love with her, who wished to rent an apartment, and proposed —

Thérèse lifted a blanched face, and, with an inexpres-

sible mixture of scorn and determination, she pointed to the door.

"Go!" she said, "and never let me see you here again!"

The old woman tried to regain her ground; then she began to defend herself, and finally to apologize. But Thérèse, as haughty in her garret as a queen in her palace, ordered her out a second time so imperiously that the old woman retired with lowered crest, muttering as she went, —

"Good gracious! we did not know that one!"

From this time Thérèse had no agent, and was herself forced to offer her work in the shops of the linen-drapers of Chartres. Some recognized her as the former forewoman of Mademoiselle Francotte, and made her all kinds of offers to come to them in the same position that she had been known to fill so well; but she did not wish to be seen behind the counter. Besides, she had reasons for desiring seclusion and solitude.

She lived thus up to the time when the cholera invaded Chartres, and then poor Thérèse became a sister of mercy in her own unfortunate suburb. But one morning when she was about to rise and go to the aid of a sick neighbor, her own strength had failed. The wing of the black angel had brushed her in passing. We have seen in what state she had been found by the Chevalier de la Graverie.

Such was Thérèse's story. For five months she had neither seen nor heard anything of Gratien. As to the wedding ring which she wore on her finger, her only recollection in connection with it was that it had been given her with the injunction to preserve it religiously as a means by which she might some day gain recognition from her family.

The chevalier had listened with devoted attention to the tale Thérèse had unfolded. When she spoke of the loss of Black, he felt a warm flush overspread his face; then, when he had learned the terrible consequences entailed in that loss, — how, by taking advantage of Black's absence and pretending to find her dog, those wretches had enticed her into a pitfall where she had lost her honor and in all probability her whole happiness, — then the chevalier, overcome with genuine remorse, seizing and kissing her hands, fell on his knees, exclaiming, —

"Ah, Thérèse! Thérèse! God is good. He tries us sometimes, my child; but, believe me, it is not without intention that he has sent me across your path; and from this day I swear to devote my entire life to securing your happiness."

"Alas! monsieur," answered Thérèse, not in any way understanding this outburst of the chevalier's, "my happiness! you forget, there is no longer any possibility of happiness for me. It would have been happiness to live with Henri, and now I am forever separated from him."

"Well! well! well!" cried the chevalier, with the confidence of a joyful man, convinced that the chance which had brought him Mathilde's child so unexpectedly could not possibly stop midway. "Ah, well, we will arrange all that! Monsieur Henri is not the only man in the world, — the devil, no! There is Monsieur Gratien."

"That would not be happiness," returned Thérèse; "it would be reparation, that is all."

"Eh! well," said the chevalier, "that strikes me as something."

Thérèse shook her head, saying: "Do you mean that a young man of a rich and noble family would ever con-

sent to marry a poor work-woman like me? I have served as his plaything, that is all. Do you think that he would ever have dared so to treat the daughter of a count or a marquis, having a father or brothers to avenge the outrage which he did not hesitate to inflict upon a poor orphan?"

The chevalier felt a probe pierce his heart, and his eyes flashed; it was the first time a desire for vengeance had animated him. Never had he felt towards Monsieur de Pontfarcy the resentment that was now rising within him against Gratien. He recalled with a thrill that, during his travels through Mexico, he had learned how to place a ball skilfully enough to miss but once out of three times those famous birds which Dumesnil, for his part, never missed. Then, instinctively, he executed that marvellous feint, the secret thrust which the captain had taught him; Dumesnil had had it from a Neapolitan master of arms. But why was he recalling that? Why should he be thinking of that with set teeth? The chevalier did not account for it; nevertheless, he thought of it.

As for Thérèse, she remained silent and bowed down; she noticed neither the fierce frown which had for an instant furrowed the chevalier's forehead, nor the movement of his hand as he executed in pantomime the secret lunge. This conversation had drawn heavily upon her strength; and at the last words she uttered, which we have just given, she was seized again with the dry, hollow cough which had already caused Monsieur de la Graverie much anxiety.

The chevalier postponed, therefore, to another time, asking her the final details, if there were any more to give. He had noticed that not once had Thérèse mentioned the family name of Henri and Gratien, merely giving their baptismal names. But in order to find

Gratien again, when he was ready for a settlement with him, the chevalier did not necessarily require to know his family name; he knew the young man's regiment, and it would be easy enough to learn from the Minister of War in what garrison this regiment was; and the faces of Gratien and his adviser, Louville, were so engraved upon his mind that he had no doubt of being able to recognize them at first sight.

But what seemed to the chevalier to be immediately urgent was the need of assuring himself of the truth of his hopes, founded upon the mystery surrounding the birth of Thérèse; he was conscious, in the unaccustomed sentiment with which the young girl inspired him, of a joy so pure, a charm so magnetic, an attraction so powerful, that he must hasten, in order to derive from it all the happiness it could yield him, to legitimatize the delight that arose from this emotion.

Before everything, however, Thérèse must be so far restored that the chevalier, when leaving her to begin his search, should suffer no anxiety, not merely for her health, but for her life.

XXVII.

IN WHICH THE CHEVALIER DE LA GRAVERIE IS FOR A MOMENT DISTURBED BY THE SCANDAL THAT HE HAS CAUSED IN THE VIRTUOUS TOWN OF CHARTRES.

Meanwhile, in a town like Chartres, an event like that of introducing a young girl into the home of an old bachelor, — a personage, moreover, of importance both on account of his birth and his fortune, — could not be passed over unnoticed. The comments of every one, then, soon endowed it with gigantic proportions, and at the end of eight days they had completely changed its import. Monsieur le Chevalier, already under suspicion because of his eccentric relations with Black, became in a few days, through the natural descent of bourgeois tittle-tattle, a frightfully immoral man, who, not satisfied with seducing a young girl, was adding the public scandal of openly living with her, — a man, in short, who could not honorably be recognized by any person possessed of the least self-respect.

As she became stronger, Thérèse began to be concerned as to what she could do for one whom she looked upon as a benefactor, and for whom she felt a filial love. Consequently, she exacted that he should take the daily walk which she regarded as essential to his health. The chevalier, on his side, very happy in this sweet and affectionate bondage, followed her orders to the letter; and, like a well-regulated machine, which, disturbed for a

moment, resumes at the first impetus its habitual motion, he consecrated, as formerly, two hours between breakfast and dinner to a walk on the hills. Only, this walk was now taken in company with Black, who, sharing as he did all his master's sentiments, seemed to be, if not the happiest dog in the world, at least one of the happiest.

We have said that the chevalier had determined not to act in too great haste; that is, he had resolved first to penetrate the mystery of Thérèse's birth. To form a resolution had not been an easy undertaking for a man who, up to that time, had made of his life one indifferent, careless lethargy; also, even with his resolution as a starting-point, it remained to decide what course he should pursue. Considering a plan of action was the occupation of the chevalier's walks. What could he do and what ought he to do to accomplish his ends? His preoccupation at these times was very great, Black's gambols and caresses being the only successful distraction.

Thus, for a long time, the chevalier failed to remark the gross affectation with which the very people who had the most frequently been his guests appeared not to see him as they drew near, in order that they might avoid saluting him. However, one day, less abstracted than usual, he had ceremoniously saluted an old dowager who held a high position in the society of the Cloister of Nôtre Dame; and then he remarked that, when returning his salutation, — with her head only, — her mouth assumed a most significantly disdainful expression. Monsieur de la Graverie went home in a very perturbed state of mind.

Like all men who lead contracted lives, the chevalier was very much concerned as to "what people will say;" and the idea that he had become unworthy of public esteem made his very blood run cold. And he had not

sufficient fortitude, sufficient self-control, to hide his concern from Thérèse, who knew how to question him skilfully enough to get at the secret of his annoyance. The chevalier related to her very simply and naturally the uncivil behavior of the dowager.

"You see, my dear, kind friend," cried the young girl, "that my sad fate must react upon all who interest themselves in me; but I cannot suffer you any longer to be the victim."

"What do you mean?" returned the startled chevalier.

"Yes," Thérèse continued, "I am now well, thanks to your care, and can take up my work again. I will go away, but from time to time, with your permission, I will come back to thank you for all your goodness, and to prove that I shall never forget that I owe you my life."

The chevalier turned pale. "Go away! leave me alone! You will not think of it, Thérèse! *Mon Dieu!* what will become of me, alone?"

"Before I came," said Thérèse, "you lived alone."

"Before you came! yes, I thought I could live that way," responded the chevalier; "but since your coming I have grown accustomed to your sweet presence. Oh," exclaimed the chevalier, overcome by a mournful return of the past, "I, too, have loved! At first, there was your — "

He stopped. Thérèse was regarding him with astonishment.

"At first, there was a woman — " resumed the chevalier. "I thought I should die when she — "

"When she died?" asked Thérèse.

"Yes," he went on, "when she died, — since unfaithfulness, treachery, forgetfulness, my child, is death!"

"Oh, I know that!" cried Thérèse, sobbing.

"There!" exclaimed the chevalier, striking his fore

head, "now I have made you weep! *Sac-à-papier!* what a double brute I am!"

"No! no! no!" sobbed Thérèse. "You are the best of men; and if you must suffer, — you, — no one has a right to be exempt from human suffering."

"Yes," answered the chevalier, sadly, "I have suffered, indeed, my poor child! But, happily, I had a friend, — ah, I loved him well! And I love him still, do I not, Black?"

Black, who was keenly watching the chevalier at this moment as if he knew that he would soon be noticed, came at the call of his master, who took his head between his hands and tenderly caressed it.

Thérèse wondered what connection could exist between Black and this friend of whom the chevalier spoke, and how Black could be appealed to as a witness of that friendship. But it was, indeed, a problem that she could not solve, and one that would have been very difficult for the chevalier himself to explain.

Monsieur de la Graverie remained for some time in contemplation of Black. Then, suddenly redoubling his caresses of the animal, and with a gentle glance at Thérèse, he murmured: —

"No, my poor Dumesnil! no! be tranquil — there! I will never abandon her, — though the whole town of Chartres turn its back, and all the dowagers in the world make faces at me."

Thérèse regarded the chevalier with a kind of fear. Had this good man a tendency to madness? At any rate, it must be a very gentle and mild lunacy, this of the chevalier's, and Thérèse said to herself that she would never be afraid of it. She took up the thread of their conversation again.

"It must be, Monsieur le Chevalier," said she.

The chevalier emerged from his revery. "What? What must be, my child?" he asked with infinite gentleness.

"I must go away."

"Ah, yes! I remember you said that. And I in reply said: 'Thérèse, my beloved child, do you think it possible that I could live hereafter in isolation?' Just think, dear child, in what loneliness your departure would leave me!"

"I am thinking of all that, monsieur, and, selfish as it is, of all the pain it will cause me to leave you. But this separation is necessary. When I am no longer here, you will recover the friends who avoid you to-day; when I have ceased to disturb your existence, you will again resume your peaceful habits."

"Disturb! Disturb my existence, ungrateful child! But, understand one thing, that, aside from the time when — "

The chevalier heaved a sigh; then resumed: —

"I have known happiness only since you entered the house."

"A sorry happiness!" answered Thérèse, smiling through her tears; "such cares and continual commotions, such torments and incessant worries! For, in the midst of my sufferings, prostration, and delirium even, I saw how good you were, caring for my life as if you really were my father."

"Your father!" cried the chevalier, "as if I really were your father! And who has told you that I am not your father?"

"Ah, monsieur!" sighed Thérèse, "your goodness has inspired you with this generous fable; but it does not mislead me. If you had been my father, if you had been bound to me by any kinship whatever, would you,

who are rich and happy, have left my childhood destitute and miserable? Would my youth have been deprived of the support, counsel, and love of the one to whom I owed my existence? Alas! no, monsieur, no! To you I am merely the stranger whom your charity has received, whom a feeling of tenderness for suffering humanity has inspired you with a thought, perhaps, of adopting; but, certainly, and the more's the pity," she added, shaking her head, "I am not your daughter."

The chevalier lowered his eyes and bent his head; what the young girl had just said touched him like a reproach. At the bottom of his heart he cursed the indifference with which he allowed his brother to look after the future of Madame de la Graverie; he hated himself for having, with the mean instinct of self-preservation, shirked the ordinary responsibilities of every man; and he finally asked himself how he could have lived so many long years without concerning himself as to what had become of his wife, and of the child who, after all, had the right to bear his name.

As a result of this conversation, and more especially of the revery which followed it, the chevalier's indolent indecision received a vigorous shock. He fairly trembled lest Thérèse, yielding to the suggestions of her susceptible delicacy, should carry out her resolve; and the heart of the good man, kept young by the calm in which he had lived so long, had become so ardently set upon its new affection that he could not think of being separated from the young girl with less terror than if it were a question of his own immediate death. He determined, then, at whatever cost of comfort, to make a trip to Paris. The purpose of this journey was to find his brother again, and to learn from him some facts concerning the fate of Madame de la Graverie and her child.

To forsake his home and quiet habits, his fresh, sweet-scented garden, was an ordeal to which, a few months before, the chevalier would have been quite unequal. Yet to-day, when he had to leave behind him Thérèse and Black, the two joys of his heart so long void, the good man decided to go, — so great a change had been wrought in him! In deciding thus, however, he thought himself very heroic; and, indeed, the taking of so stern a step required no less a spur than the hope of forever securing to himself a happiness so sweet.

The chevalier's decision taken, the execution of it remained. There lay the difficulty. Every day he said: —

"I will go to-morrow."

To-morrow came, and the chevalier, having no place reserved in the mail-coach, remarked: —

"I shall either find no place, or be forced to ride backward."

And riding backward in a carriage was insufferable to the chevalier.

It was not the lack of a valise that detained Monsieur de la Graverie, for he had bought a new one of the size exacted by law for mail-coaches; he had crammed it with linen and clothes; with such a valise he could have gone to Papaete and back. He had only to put down the flap and turn the key. But the chevalier did not put down the flap; the chevalier did not turn the key; in fact, the chevalier did not set out. This did not prevent his saying every day, as he kissed Thérèse and patted Black: —

"My poor friends, you know that to-morrow I shall be leaving you."

XXVIII.

IN WHICH THE CHEVALIER SETS OUT FOR PARIS.

One day, when Thérèse was suffering more than she had done for many days, the chevalier, having this time a plausible pretext for not mentioning his journey to Paris, had cared for her all day. The child had gone to sleep about seven o'clock in the evening, first exacting a promise from the chevalier that he would take the walk by moonlight that he had missed by daylight. The chevalier had promised; and, as this daily promenade was essential to his health, and the weather was very magnificent, while Black, with wagging tail, was also soliciting him on all sides and making dashes toward the door, the chevalier took up his gloves, hat, and cane, and went out.

It is unnecessary to say that, by night or by day, there was but one walk for the Chevalier de la Graverie; it was the tour of the town. Accordingly, he directed his steps to the side towards the hills. About half-past nine in the evening he had reached the Rue du Cheval-Blanc. Just as he was turning the corner near the cathedral into this street, he noticed the mail-coach changing horses.

"Ah," thought he, "if Thérèse had not been so much worse to-day than yesterday, I should have taken a place for Paris; here was my opportunity."

Mechanically, the chevalier approached the coach. Why did he approach the coach? Vain question!

All provincials are more or less loungers; a diligence changing its horses, or an approaching coach, has such fascination for their idleness that the post-stand and the surrounding *cafés* are, in most towns, the rendezvous of all idlers. New faces to gaze upon, conjectures to hazard, scandals to rehash, to say nothing of clouds of dust, clattering wheels, jingling bells, swearing postilions, and barking dogs, — all are distractions for brains empty or congested. The departure and the arrival, or rather the arrival and the departure, of travellers constitute all the chapters of the unforeseen in provincial existences, and Monsieur de la Graverie was too much the man of tradition to overlook the good fortune cast in his way by chance. He drew near the government coach at the very moment when the stable boy had just hooked the last trace, and the postilion had gathered up the reins and snapped his whip, warning his horses of their departure. The conductor, with portfolio under his arm, sprang between Monsieur de la Graverie and the carriage, landed on the coach step, and shouted to the postilion: —

"All right!"

The postilion brought down his lash, the carriage swayed, and the badly fastened door shook free. The door opened.

During these brief moments Black had been standing like a pointer beside the vehicle, sniffing with wide-distended nostrils. This attention manifested by Black, with no apparent reason, annoyed the chevalier not a little. But his annoyance was converted into astonishment when he saw Black leap through the open door into the vehicle, and lavish all manner of caresses upon a traveller enveloped in a great cloak, and whose outlines could be distinguished in the depths of the mail-coach, lounging in the corner which was most distant

from the chevalier. In regular sequence, the chevalier's astonishment gave way to stupefaction when a hand reached out from the cloak, closed the door with a clang, fastening the button within, and a voice cried: —

"Ah! is it you, Black?"

The carriage whirled away.

At the sound of the wheels and the snapping whip, at the start of the mail-coach bearing away his friend, the chevalier's senses returned. The coach was already twenty yards away.

"Why, they are carrying off Black!" he shouted; "they are stealing Black! Conductor! Conductor!"

The rumbling of the heavy vehicle over the pavement drowned the shouts of the chevalier. Rendered desperate by the loss of his dog, jealous of the preference displayed for a stranger, and perplexed as to this unexpected recognition, suspecting that it involved Thérèse, the chevalier, despite his age and the gouty twinges that sometimes seized him by the great toe, bravely gave chase to the vehicle.

But the mail-coach was drawn by four horses with sixteen feet, all sound and vigorous, while one of the two that carried the poor chevalier was slightly damaged. He would never have caught nor even come near it, had not a cart been entering the Porte Châtelet at the same time that the coach was ready to go out, thus delaying the latter some seconds.

Monsieur de la Graverie, profiting by the hindrance, caught up with the coach, leaped upon the step, and clung to the door with one hand and to the leather strap with the other. To utter a word was out of the question; the race had so exhausted the poor man that he could not articulate a sound. However, once perched there, he felt easy; if the carriage went fast, he would

go with it; and, besides, he knew that a quarter of a league away, before reaching the Faubourg de Lèves, they would come to a mountain whose steep slope could be ascended only at a walk, or at most at a very gentle trot. By that time he would have regained his breath, and he would be prepared to broach the subject of his complaint.

What the chevalier had foreseen came to pass: while he was perched on the step during that kilometre he regained his breath, and, having reached the foot of the incline, the coach-horses passed from a gallop to a trot, and then to a walk.

For sometime, while the chevalier was gazing in from the outside, Black was gazing out from within; and, his two paws on the window-sill and his head half outside, he sniffed the night air with the calm assurance of a traveller whose name stretches across the conductor's page, endorsed "Paid." Monsieur de la Graverie, who, after all, wished only his dog, and who wished as well to get him without discussion, took a backward leap and landed on the highway; and, hoping that the animal would follow, he called, —

"Black!"

Black, indeed, sprang forward; but a strong hand held him back by the collar and retained him, willy-nilly, in the carriage.

"Black!" repeated the chevalier, in a tone that set Black the choice of instant obedience or of absolute disobedience.

"Well!" said a voice from the interior of the coach, "will you not stop calling my dog? Would you like him to break his back on the pavement?"

"Your dog!" cried the astounded chevalier.

"Certainly, my dog;" replied the voice.

"Ah, what assurance!" cried the chevalier. "That dog is mine! Do you hear? Mine, I tell you!"

"Well, if he is yours, it is because you have stolen him from his mistress."

"From his mistress?" repeated the chevalier, overwhelmed with astonishment as he trotted beside the carriage. "Can you tell me the name of his mistress?"

"Come," said another voice, "decide one way or the other; give that old imbecile his dog or send him packing; but, *mille millions de cigares!* let me go to sleep! Night was made for sleep, especially when one is riding in a mail-coach."

"Very well," said the other voice, "I will keep Black."

This double provocation affected the chevalier like an electric shock. His nerves, already irritated by the chase, now gave way; and without reckoning the double jeopardy of picking a quarrel on the highway, and hanging to a coach which at any moment might break into a gallop, he seized the key and tried to open the door, but not succeeding, he hoisted himself to the step, and again was on a level with the window that ventilated the interior of the coach.

"Oh," said he, "I am an old imbecile, am I? And you will keep Black, eh! That remains to be seen!"

"Oh, that soon will be seen," said the one of the two travellers that seemed to favor extreme measures. And, taking the chevalier by the throat, he thrust him violently backward.

But his desire to keep an animal that he prized so highly, and for which he cherished such a strange superstition, doubled the chevalier's strength, and, violent though the shock had been, it did not loosen his hold, nor did it seem even to stagger him.

"Take care, monsieur!" said the chevalier, with dignity; "among gentlemen, or, among soldiers —"

"It is the same thing, monsieur," responded the aggressor.

"Not always," answered the chevalier. "Among gentleman or among soldiers, who touches, strikes!"

"Oh, as you will," said the young man; "if it will give you any satisfaction, I admit that I have touched you, or struck you,— take your choice."

The chevalier was about to answer this challenge by drawing his card from his pocket; he was already searching for it, when the young man who seemed to act as peacemaker cried out, —

"Louville! Louville! an old man!"

"Well! what do I care? The man that wakes me when I am sleeping, *mille cigares!* is neither a young man nor an old one, — he is my enemy!"

"The old man, monsieur," said the chevalier, "is an officer like yourself; and, what is more, he is a Chevalier de Saint Louis. Here is my card."

But it was the young man with the conciliatory voice who received it; and, shoving his friend from his corner toward the other, he said, —

"Come, take my place and give me yours."

The churlish officer obeyed, with much grumbling.

"I beg your pardon, monsieur, in behalf of my comrade. He is a well-bred fellow, usually; but, in order to display the benefits of his training, he needs to be awake. At this present moment, unfortunately, he is asleep."

"Very well," said the chevalier, "yours is somewhat better company. But, monsieur, for your part, you have said, 'I will keep Black.'"

"Certainly, I said that."

"Well, I say, give me Black! I wish Black; Black is mine."

"Black is no more yours than he is mine."

As he pronounced these words the traveller squared his face by the chevalier's. The latter, whom the allusion to Thérèse had already surprised, uttered a cry of amazement upon recognizing the young man. It was Gratien, chief actor in the crime against Thérèse; the other officer was the instigator.

The chevalier's feelings so overcame him that he was stricken speechless for some seconds. There must be something providential in all this! His first impulse was one of gratitude to Black. Taking the dog's muzzle between his two hands, he kissed him.

"Oh, this time," he murmured, "there can be no doubt! It is you, my good Dumesnil! Yes, it is indeed you, who after having found my child, are now anxious to aid me in restoring her honor and assuring her future."

"By the horns of the devil!" exclaimed the other officer, finding his customary oath insufficient for this unusual occasion; "the man is a fool, and I shall call the conductor and have him thrown off the step! Conductor! Conductor!"

"Louville! Louville!" remonstrated his friend, evidently regretting this violence, and the more, in that he now knew by the chevalier's own statement that it was exhibited toward a gentleman.

But the conductor had heard the appeal. He put his head outside the box, saw a man crouching at the door of the coach, and took him for a robber with his pistols covering the passengers. He descended, then, without stopping the coach, and savagely attacked the chevalier.

"Oh! Oh!" ejaculated the poor man, "don't be such a brute, Pinaud!"

Pinaud, by the way, was one of the couriers charged with furnishing provisions to the chevalier's establishment. Pinaud recoiled in amazement.

"Eh! well!" continued Monsieur de la Graverie, "we are old acquaintances, it seems to me, *sac-à-papier!*"

Pinaud was beginning to recognize the chevalier, and, at the familiar oath, he fully identified him.

"You on the road at this hour, Monsieur le Chevalier!" cried he.

"Certainly, it is I."

"So I see, indeed! But who the devil would have thought it? Are n't you afraid of heat or cold or draughts or dampness or lumbago?"

"I am not afraid of anything, Pinaud," answered the chevalier, who in his nervous excitement could have quarrelled with a windmill, like Don Quixote.

"But with whom have you business, here on the highway?"

"With you, Pinaud."

"How! with me?"

"Yes, yes, yes, with you! I wish you to stop your coach, Pinaud, and allow me to talk ten minutes with this gentleman."

"Impossible, Monsieur le Chevalier!"

"But for me, Pinaud — "

"I would say 'no' to God Almighty!"

"To God Almighty!"

"Emphatically! I am due at a certain hour. My mail would be late. But you can do better — "

"Ah!"

"There are four places in the coach, and only two are taken; get inside, and then, at Maintenon, you can get out. The morning mail will carry you back."

"And turn out at two o'clock in the morning? No,

Pinaud; that is contrary to my habits, my friend. However, there is something in what you say; I have needed to go to Paris, but have put it off from day to day. Now, I will get into your coach and go on to Paris."

"You have needed to go to Paris? You are going to Paris. And you have not definitely and carefully engaged your place at the office eight days ahead, to be sure of securing a corner, where you will not have to ride backward? Well! they are right, monsieur, you are not the same man! Come, get in!" continued Pinaud, touching a spring and opening the door which the chevalier had been unable to open. "If, in truth, one of these gentlemen were a pretty girl like the one you have at home, I should understand all this; and it is only because I have to make four leagues an hour to satisfy the government, that I do not ask for the key of your little secret."

Monsieur de la Graverie climbed into the vehicle, and, quite out of breath, dropped on the cushion in front; while Black, now that his ravisher had set him free, leaped upon the chevalier, and, without waiting for an invitation, licked his chin.

XXIX.

CONCERNING THE DIALOGUE HELD IN THE MAIL-COACH.

The two officers advanced no objections to the chevalier's installing himself in the coach. Louville, well wrapped in his cloak, made a pretence of being asleep. Gratien, on the contrary, had followed every movement of the chevalier with a curiosity not unmixed with disquietude. The young officer felt that, despite pacific appearances, there was an enemy more to be feared than his quiet bearing betrayed. And so the chevalier was hardly seated before Gratien tried to direct the conversation.

But the chevalier, with a deprecatory gesture, said: "Allow me, monsieur, to recover my breath and equilibrium; I am not accustomed, I must confess, to such exciting races. We will talk presently, as you seem to wish it, but the conversation will undoubtedly take a more serious turn than you anticipate. *Pardieu!* Pinaud did me a royal service in checking his coach; I felt my strength giving way, and expected every moment to lose my hold and measure my length on the ground, which, at my age, would have been a rather serious matter."

"In truth, monsieur, you are not young enough to engage in such sports."

"I may be aware of that myself, monsieur, but I shall not permit you to take it into account; do you understand?"

"Ah, bless my heart! if you are not mad," cried Gratien at this rebuff, "you have at least a very original wit."

"He's mad!" growled Louville from the depths of his cloak.

"Monsieur," said the chevalier, responding to Louville's interpolation, "I have no business with you, and I do not wish to have; it is Monsieur Gratien alone — just now at least — whom I do the honor to address."

"Oh!" cried Gratien, "you seem to know me, monsieur?"

"Very well, and for this long time."

"Not at college, however?" demanded the young man, laughing.

"Monsieur," responded the chevalier, "I could wish that you had received, whether at college or elsewhere, the same education as I; you would have lost nothing by it in courtesy or in morality."

"Bravo, chevalier!" laughed Louville; "reform the rascal for me!"

"I will undertake the task with the greater pleasure and earnestness, in that, in your friend's case, in spite of bad training, the heart has remained good and kind, which gives me some hope of success."

"While in my case?"

"I would no more attempt to change your heart than your shape; I think there is a bad twist in both, and that I have arrived too late."

"Bravo, chevalier!" said Gratien in his turn, while Louville, who perfectly understood the chevalier's allusion, pretended to try unsuccessfully to comprehend; "bravo! Pocket that, Louville!"

"Yes, if you have room," added the chevalier.

"Come, now!" said Louville, pulling his moustache, "did you, pray, get into the coach to jeer us?"

"No, monsieur, I wish to speak seriously; that is why I must beg you to have the goodness not to join in the conversation, as, I repeat, my business is with Monsieur Gratien and not with you."

"And shall I talk with Black?" said Louville, trying to be witty.

"You can talk to Black, if you wish," replied the chevalier; "but I question whether he will reply to you, so little does he remember your good intentions in his behalf."

"Come, I like that!" ejaculated Louville; "one would suppose you thought I had bad intentions towards Black, now! Why not hand me over immediately to the court of assize?"

"Because, unhappily, monsieur, the poisoning of a dog is not regarded in the court of assize as a crime, although, in my opinion, certain dogs are more to be regretted than certain persons."

"Really, Gratien," said Louville, forcing a laugh, "I begin to be glad you are the cause of monsieur's favoring us with his company; and if the journey were to last two or three days instead of five or six hours, I believe that on arrival we should be the best friends in the world."

"Ah, well," answered the chevalier, with a manner that was half courtesy, half raillery, "there is this difference between us; the longer our journey, the less I should like you at the end of it. I am sincerely and heartily glad that it is to be of no longer duration."

"*Mille cigares!*" said the officer, sitting upright in his corner, "will you make an end of your impertinences, monsieur?"

"There!" responded the chevalier, "see how angry you are because I have a little more wit than you! Consider, monsieur, that I am twice your age; when you are as old as I, you will undoubtedly have as much, or even more than I; only, you must wait. Patience, young man! have patience!"

"That is a virtue, monsieur, to which you seem truly determined to make us serve our apprenticeship; and we must already have pretty fine dispositions indeed to have been able to endure the trials you have imposed on us for the last ten minutes."

"If monsieur, having regained his breath," said Gratien, "wishes to broach the serious matter which he has delayed on account of his exhaustion, — an exhaustion which I am happy to see has no worse effect than that of loosening his tongue and sharpening his wit, — I shall be in excellent mood for listening."

"*Pardieu!* gentlemen; you will, I presume, indulge an old man, and pardon his freedom of speech. At my age, the tongue is the only weapon that one has not only not forgotten how to handle, but in whose use one may even have improved in skill; you should not reproach me, then, for defending myself with it too readily."

"Ah, well, that may be; unbosom yourself," said Louville. "We shall soon be changing horses; and however interesting the subject of which you wish to speak, I am not inclined, for my part, to sacrifice the delicious sleep one enjoys when so gently cradled. The diligence is the one machine that recalls my infancy; the rumble of the wheels lulls me like my old nurse's lullaby. Let us hear what you have to say."

"It is a question of a very serious and at the same time very futile nature; it concerns an affair which usually has only an agreeable termination for the military

rover, — although often resulting in despair, misery, and suicide. It is a case of trifling — I soften the word — of which Monsieur Gratien has been guilty."

Gratien trembled; perhaps he would have replied, had not Louville intervened.

"And you are posing as the redressor of my friend's wrong-doings? That is a fine rôle, and one that cannot fail of suitable reward if the victim be ever so little grateful; since Don Quixote's day the office has fallen somewhat into disuse, but you revive it! Bravo!"

"I have already had the honor of telling you, monsieur, that I neither have nor wish to have any business with you. I am speaking to Monsieur Gratien. The deuce! if he was able to dispense with you as go-between when he did the wrong, I presume that you are not necessary to him when it is a question of righting it."

"And who says that I was not his adviser in this affair?"

"That would not astound me; but I should pity your friend all the more in that case."

"And why?"

"Because he would be the second victim of your vicious instincts."

"Come, proceed, monsieur!" said Gratien. "Who is the honest person that you accuse me of misleading?"

"I refer, monsieur, to the girl to whom you alluded as the mistress of Black, — to Thérèse, in short!"

Gratien made no reply for a moment; then he stammered: "Well, and what do you demand in the name of Thérèse? Speak out, monsieur!"

"To marry her, *pardieu!*" cried Louville. "Monsieur, who strikes me as a serious man, would not be disconcerted, at least! Come, Gratien, are you ready to lead Mademoiselle Thérèse to the altar? Very well!

write to the colonel, ask your father's permission, and now let us sleep! For now that we know monsieur's wishes, that is the best thing we can do."

"You know, indeed, monsieur," replied Gratien, who seemed to have gained some assurance from his friend's intervention, "that all this is mere pleasantry. I assuredly am ready to perform my duty as a gentleman toward Mademoiselle Thérèse, but — "

"But you begin by failing in that duty," said the Chevalier de la Graverie.

"How so?"

"In this way: is not the first duty of what you call a gentleman, and of what I should call an honest man, that of giving his name to his child?"

"What!" cried Gratien, "Thérèse — "

"Alas! Monsieur Gratien," answered the chevalier, "it is one of the least sad of the consequences attending the event to which I referred a moment ago."

"And what would you have him do?" Louville again interrupted. "Would it seem suitable to you that a squad of nurses should be attached to each regiment? We have moved the garrison; what then! it is a misfortune. Let the young lady seek for consolation among the lancers who have succeeded us; she is too pretty to have to look very long."

"Do you share your friend's sentiments?" inquired the chevalier of Gratien.

"Not at all, monsieur. Louville lets his friendship for me carry him too far. Of course, I have wronged, grievously wronged, Mademoiselle Thérèse; and I wish she had not been thrown in my way. I am quite ready, I repeat, to do anything I can to relieve her position; and this assurance must suffice you. You are a man of the world, monsieur; and you understand, too well to press

the matter further, that such a union would be entirely incompatible with the social obligations of a man of my position."

"You deceive yourself, Monsieur Gratien: I shall insist; and what is more, I have so good an opinion of you as to hope that my entreaties will not be in vain."

"In that case, let me assure you, monsieur, that what you ask is impossible."

"Nothing is impossible, Monsieur Gratien, to a man who faces his duty. I know something about that myself. Why, a few years ago, I shuddered at the sight of a naked sword; I trembled at the report of a gun; anything, in fact, that disturbed the perfect calm of my life drove me into a fever. And now, here I am, at this hour of the night, coursing the highway in an abominable diligence, instead of sweetly slumbering in my bed; and I am riding backward, too, a thing that is particularly disagreeable to me; and I am prepared to do yet more, all because duty has called me. You are wrong, monsieur, and look as if you could face much worse difficulties without groaning."

Gratien was about to respond; but Louville did not give him time.

"Come now, my dear monsieur," said he to the Chevalier de la Graverie, "you really must be mad! unless — but hold, I have it! Since the marriage of Thérèse seems so urgent to you, since in your estimation it is necessary that her child should have a name, why do you not marry the mother and give the child your own name?"

"Did not very serious obstacles — which I have the right to keep to myself — forbid me such a course, upon the refusal of Monsieur Gratien, I should meditate nothing less."

"*Mille cigares!*" exclaimed Louville, "you are a queer one!"

"Pardon me, monsieur," said Gratien, "but a moment ago you denied that impossibilities could exist, and now you declare one. Why should you reserve this privilege, take advantage of this monopoly?"

"Grant either of two reasons: I may be married, or I may be of a degree of kinship too close for marriage with Thérèse; in either case, you see I cannot be her husband."

"I acknowledge it."

"While you are a bachelor, and a stranger, by ties of blood at least, to the person in question."

Gratien remained silent.

"Come," continued the chevalier, "let us examine calmly, Monsieur Gratien, into what prevents your remaining an honorable man in your own eyes, if not in those of your friends. Why should you refuse to give your hand to a young girl whom you have loved enough to wrong by an action strongly resembling a crime? Why should you refuse to acknowledge the child of which you are the father? Surely, you have nothing to say against the looks of the one whom I persist in regarding as your future wife?"

"No," answered Gratien.

"Bah! an irregularly pretty face!" said Louville.

"In regard to disposition, it would be impossible to find a sweeter woman; and I assure you that she would appreciate your action so fully that gratitude would take the place of love that is not exactly yours."

"But a grisette!"

"A working-girl, monsieur; which is not always the same thing. A simple working-girl, it is true; but I, with opportunities for comparison, have observed that

many great ladies have lacked the natural air of distinction which this girl possesses. After she has mingled with the world a short time, Thérèse will be a very remarkable and a much remarked woman."

"Granted," cried Louville, "that she has twenty-five thousand livres' revenue in good qualities."

"But my family, monsieur," said Gratien, — "my family, which is noble and wealthy, do you think that, in case I agreed to your proposal, they would sanction such a union?"

"Who has told you that Thérèse's family is not equal to yours?"

"Let monsieur alone, Gratien," said Louville, "and we shall presently see Thérèse blooming into an archduchess, who has made *lingerie* for amusement."

"More than that, monsieur," continued the chevalier; "who has told you that Thérèse will not inherit a fortune equal at least to yours?"

"Why," returned Gratien, with embarrassment, "if that were the case —"

"Oh, come now!" cried Louville, pettishly, "you are catching the complaint, it seems to me! You must be mad, Gratien, — madder, in fact, than the good man that is talking to you! But I am here, fortunately; and I will see that you do not allow yourself to be inveigled further. Give him once for all a good, square *no;* then we can sleep in peace, and the devil take him and his child and their dog!"

And, by way of peroration, Louville launched a kick at Black, for whom, it will be recalled, he had never evinced any great affection. Black gave a dolorous yelp.

Monsieur de la Graverie received full in his heart the rebound of that kick.

"Monsieur," said he, addressing Louville, "up to this

point, your language has been that of an idiot; your behavior is that of a brutal man, destitute of breeding. Who strikes the dog strikes the master."

"I struck your dog because he bothered me, getting between my legs. Now I think of it, I will call the conductor and make him abide by his rules; dogs have no right inside the mail-coach."

"Dumesnil — my dog — is a hundred times more fit to be here than you are; and I should make you pay dearly for the kick you have just given my poor friend if I were not dealing especially with Monsieur Gratien, and if I had not taken an oath to let nothing divert me." Then, turning to Gratien, he said: —

"Come, let us end, monsieur; for to prolong this discussion, I beg you to believe, can be no pleasanter to me as a gentleman than it is to you. Will you, yes or no, restore to this young girl the honor of which you have robbed her?"

"Put thus, monsieur, the question can have but one answer from me. No!"

"You attack a poor child, alone, friendless, defenceless; you employ an unworthy subterfuge in order to triumph over her! I have still too good an opinion of you, monsieur, to believe, on your first refusal, that you will abandon, like a coward, the mother to her despair; that you will cast your child out upon the world to the mercy of public charity."

"Monsieur!" cried Gratien, "only a moment ago you boasted of being a gentleman. I, too, am one. As such I have been accustomed to respect white hairs; but respect does not go so far as to submit to an insult. There was one word too many in your last remarks; retract it at once, I beg, monsieur!" And Gratien pronounced these last words like a true gentleman.

"Yes, monsieur," said the chevalier, realizing that he had gone too far, for the word "coward" cannot be accepted by a soldier; "I will take back all you wish; but do you, in turn, do what I ask, I implore you! If you knew how much she has suffered, poor Thérèse! and how little she was born to endure suffering! She is so good, so sweet, so tender! Oh, you would never repent of having done a good deed! If a name is lacking, I will find her one, an honorable one, — my own. If you need a fortune for the enjoyment of life, I will give up mine to you, and will reserve only a small annuity for life; and you yourself shall fix the amount. I will be content in your happiness. You will permit me to see her from time to time, and that will suffice us — will it not, my old friend? Here, Monsieur Gratien, here at your feet an old man begs of you, implores you with tears!"

And the chevalier really moved as if about to fall on his knees, but Gratien stopped him.

"In fact," said Louville, "it is a pretty little speculation that monsieur lays before you; and, if I were in your place, Gratien, I would reflect upon it."

The chevalier felt, or saw, the insinuation so cruelly thrown out by the lieutenant, and, turning to him said: —

"Ah, monsieur! is it not enough that you should, by your counsels, have caused the misfortune of poor Thérèse, without now opposing such thoughts of reparation as your friend may entertain? What has the innocent child done to you, that you should now seek to prevent Monsieur Gratien's redressing a wrong which justly is yours rather than his?"

But, unfortunately, Louville's words had taken effect.

"You are perhaps right in all that you have just said, monsieur;" replied Gratien, "and I shall not attempt

to conceal that your words have touched me. But reason ought to govern every other consideration; and after serious reflection, I answer that I cannot marry Mademoiselle Thérèse."

"Is that final?"

"It is final, monsieur. I will not wed a poor girl of obscure birth; I will not speculate. Your *protégée* must figure in one or the other alternative, and I refuse both alike."

The chevalier buried his face in his hands. His grief suffocated him, and he could not master himself enough to conceal it.

"Your grief pains me, monsieur; but since it cannot affect my unalterable decision, I think I had better give you my place. We are now about to change horses, and I will ask the courier for a seat beside him."

And in fact, almost at the same instant, the carriage stopped, and the young man got out, without a single word, a single gesture, from the chevalier to detain him.

"And now, monsieur," said Louville, drawing his cloak over his face, "I am sure it is time for us to wish each other a very good night; for my part, I promise you, I shall try to make up the time that you have caused me to lose."

"However, monsieur, once more I shall abuse the good-humor of which you have given me so many proofs," ironically observed the chevalier, "and ask for your friend's address."

"What for?" demanded Louville.

"To try once more to reach his heart."

"It is useless! He told you his resolution was fixed."

"I shall return to the charge, monsieur; a father never wearies of interceding for his child, and Thérèse is almost my own."

"But, since I tell you — *I* tell you it is useless!"

"Very well, then, monsieur, I shall ask for your address."

"Mine! You have no one for me to marry, have you?"

"Monsieur, observe that I insist upon having your card."

"*Milles cigares!* you say that in a way that is almost a challenge; you are, perhaps, the late Saint-George?"

"No, monsieur, I am only a poor devil of a fellow who hates quarrels and has a horror of blood; and I swear that it will be in spite of myself if ever I am forced to shed that of my neighbor."

"Then, sleep in peace, my dear friend, and don't torment me any more for a bit of pasteboard that would be perfectly useless to one of your peaceful disposition."

So saying, Louville settled his head back into the corner of the carriage, and soon the young officer's rumbling snores were united with the clatter of the wheels upon the pavement.

Monsieur de la Graverie did not sleep, not he; he passed the remainder of the night in thinking of what he should say to the brother whom he expected to confront in a few hours; in considering, too, by what means he could trace Thérèse's birth. And his preoccupation was so great that, in spite of his great distaste for riding backward, he did not once think of ensconcing himself in the place that Gratien had left vacant.

The next morning, at five o'clock, the coach rolled into the court of the Hôtel des Postes. There, the chevalier and his two companions found themselves face to face. Willingly would the chevalier have resumed the conversation about Thérèse before letting her betrayer escape; but Louville gave him no chance. He took

Gratien's arm, and they both went off, followed by a porter loaded down with their luggage.

"A carriage!" demanded the chevalier.

A *fiacre* was brought up. A porter, seeing a bag at the chevalier's feet, handed it up to the driver, and received a twenty-sous piece from the absent-minded chevalier for his trouble.

The chevalier made Black get in first, and then he seated himself with a shiver. The poor chevalier had set out without a cloak, and the morning chill was penetrating.

"Where do you wish to go, citizen?" demanded the driver.

"Rue Saint-Guillaume, faubourg Saint-Germain," answered the chevalier.

XXX.

HOW MONSIEUR LE BARON DE LA GRAVERIE UNDERSTANDS AND APPLIES THE PRECEPTS OF THE GOSPEL.

Although it was but half-past five o'clock in the morning, the Chevalier de la Graverie did not for a moment think of postponing his visit to his brother until later in the day. Like all men who are slow to act, the chevalier, once roused from his luxurious tranquillity, knew neither how to delay nor how to wait.

In the Rue Saint-Guillaume, the baron lived in one of those immense dwellings whose dimensions contrast oddly with the scant luxury and parsimonious habits of those who occupy them to-day. The *fiacre* containing the chevalier stopped before a great arched gate with thick oak doors, upon one of which the coachman struck repeated blows with the heavy knocker. Not a thing stirred within. He tried again, knocking louder and louder; and finally a squeaking voice issuing from the lodge at the right of the *porte-cochère* began, following ancient traditions, a long parley before deciding to draw the latch-string.

The chevalier profited by the half-opening of one of the great doors to push ahead into the court; he paid the driver, whistled for Black, who was exploring the nooks about, and then turned toward a head in a white cotton night-cap, which was strangely illuminated by the fan-

tastic glimmering of a bad candle that was held out by a thin arm thrust from the window in order to throw light upon this matutinal visitor.

"Is Monsieur le Baron de la Graverie to be seen?" demanded the chevalier.

"I beg pardon?" hazarded the concierge, male or female.

The chevalier repeated his question.

"Why, you must be mad, my dear monsieur!" cried the head. "Let me ask if you know what time it is."

The chevalier naïvely drew out his watch, and brought all the strength of his vision to bear upon the hands in order to see them in the half-light.

"It is six o'clock, my good man, — or my good woman," said the chevalier; "for your candle-light is so bad that I cannot exactly tell of what sex you are, nor whether I have the honor of addressing a man or a woman as my brother's concierge."

"What! Are you Monsieur le Baron's brother?" cried the head, with an astonished accent which the hand emphasized by a like gesture. "Why, come in, then, come into the lodge, monsieur, I beg of you, come in! For you are really shivering out there, while I can feel by my nose that I am catching cold."

"Would it not be much simpler, think you, if you were to lead the way at once to my brother?"

"To your brother?" exclaimed the head, by accent and gesture manifesting increased astonishment. "Impossible! The coachman is not up till seven; monsieur's *valet-de-chambre* does not rise till eight; it will be ten o'clock before he enters Monsieur le Baron's room; and before monsieur your brother has been shaved and powdered and dressed, at least another hour will have slipped away. That is the usual thing. Lord! you must make

up your mind to have patience. Come in, monsieur, come in!"

With these words, which it regarded as conclusive, as they were in fact, the head withdrew from the window and the shutters closed. But almost immediately the door opened, and the hospitality of the lodge, warm and nauseating, was presented to the chevalier.

"Nevertheless," persisted the chevalier, unable to decide to cross the threshold of the den, "I have very pressing business to transact with my brother, on matters of the utmost importance."

"To execute monsieur's wishes would be to lose my place. Monsieur le Baron is very rigid concerning matters of etiquette. Ah, there is no danger of any one's disobeying his orders!"

"Look you, my good woman, — for certainly you are a woman, — I will take the entire responsibility on myself. And, moreover, here is a louis to compensate you for the inconvenience this act of kindness may occasion you."

The concierge was in the act of holding out her hand to receive the gold piece, when a great racket of falling boards was heard in the yard; the crash was accompanied by sounds of frantic barking mingled with the squawks of a bird in distress.

The old woman made one leap from her lodge into the court, shouting: "Oh, *mon Dieu!* what has happened to Monsieur le Baron's Cochin-China fowls?"

The chevalier, not seeing Black anywhere, instinctively shuddered, guessing what had happened. The concierge, in fact, had taken barely three steps in the yard when the spaniel returned to his master, holding between his jaws an immense cock, whose hanging head, swinging to and fro like a pendulum, told plainly enough

that he had departed this life. It was, indeed, as the concierge had feared, a Cochin-China fowl, at that time quite a novelty.

The chevalier lifted the cock by its stilt-like legs and looked it over curiously, while Black eyed his victim with affectionate satisfaction, and appeared wholly delighted with his masterly feat.

But the concierge seemed neither to enjoy the curiosity of the one nor to share the satisfaction of the other, for she began to emit piercing shrieks blended with invocations, after the manner of the ancients. At her cries every window became alight, and from each one peered forth capriciously coifed heads, — some in gay madras handkerchiefs, some in white-cotton night-caps, and some in turbans of calico-print, all these head-dresses enriched by the stamp of the ancient régime by which they were characterized. It was the household of Monsieur le Baron. Every head gave vent to a voice of different pitch, and every voice inquired the cause of the tumult which had roused so many good people from their repose. The result was a great uproar, which was soon dominated by the sound of a bell rung with all of some one's might.

Almost instantly a phrase left every lip in such an *ensemble* as would have done honor to the supernumeraries of a boulevard theatre, —

"Ah, Monsieur le Baron is awake!"

And the tumult ceased as by magic, impressing the chevalier with a high opinion of the firmness with which his brother's household was governed.

"Come, Madame Wilhem!" cried the *valet de chambre*, snatching off his cotton night-cap and uncovering a pate as bald and polished as ivory, "come! do you go to Monsieur le Baron and tell him what has happened, and

explain how strangers can gain entrance into the house at this time of night!"

"I should never dare!" responded the poor concierge.

"Well, I will go myself," said the chevalier.

"Who are you?" demanded the *valet de chambre.*

"Who am I? I am the Chevalier de la Graverie, and I have come to see my brother."

"Ah, Monsieur le Chevalier!" cried the man, "a thousand pardons for having spoken so abruptly to you! Just permit me to get into some clothes, and then I shall have the honor of taking you to your brother."

A few moments later, the old servant appeared at the hall door, where, with many respectful demonstrations, he admitted the chevalier. He took him up a grand staircase of hewn stone having a wrought-iron railing, led the way through several rooms containing old-fashioned furniture, once gilded but now painted white for economy's sake, rapped discreetly at the last door, opened it, and announced as pompously as if he had been introducing a foreign ambassador to a prime minister, —

"Monsieur le Chevalier de la Graverie!"

The Baron de la Graverie was reposing on a very shabby-looking bed entirely destitute of curtains. Like all gentlemen who have endured the rude experiences of emigration, the baron was wont to scorn anything like the superfluities of life, as ease and comfort are now called. A wash-stand, a mahogany secretary, a night-table which opened with a folding leaf, — these, with the bed, were the chief articles of furniture in the room. On the mantel stood a copper-framed mirror, flanked by two silver candelabra and two cornets of French porcelain; about the mirror were hung several medallions representing King Louis XVIII., Charles X., and Monseigneur le

Dauphin. These were the only ornaments of this cold, bare room, which corresponded in no respect with the real position of the proprietor, or with the luxury of the domestics who surrounded him.

When the *valet de chambre* announced the chevalier, the baron raised himself upon his elbow; with his left hand he adjusted the madras that had fallen over his eyes, and with no further friendly demonstration, he cried, "And where the devil do you come from, chevalier?" Then, after a pause, and as if yielding to a sense of propriety, "Jasmin," he added, "place a stool for my brother."

The poor chevalier was frozen by this reception. It was fifteen years since he had seen his brother, and whatever had been the behavior of the elder toward him, it was not without deep emotion that he found himself in the presence of this man who had derived his being from the same loins as he; and all his blood rushed to his heart when he realized how little importance the Baron de la Graverie attached to the life or death of his younger brother. Thus, the burden of the conversation fell upon the baron. The baron took advantage of it.

"How you have changed, my poor chevalier!" said he, inspecting his brother from head to foot, with a cold curiosity quite devoid of interest.

"I cannot return the compliment, brother," said Dieudonné; "for I find you with the same face, the same manner, the same voice as on the day I left you."

And, in fact, the Baron de la Graverie, always shrivelled and bony, and wrinkled early, by way of compensation had seen with impunity many years roll over his head. Living without care, like all profound egoists, he had not added a wrinkle to his early ones, not a white hair to his locks prematurely gray.

"And what brings you here, brother?" asked the baron; "for I presume that nothing less than a very grave motive could induce you to force my door at such an unseasonable hour. Where are you from? My notary, through whom I keep myself informed as to the state of your affairs and also as to the state of your health, has told me that you live, I think, at Chartres in Beauce, or at Meaux in Brie — I do not know which; no, I think it is at Chartres, is it not?"

"Yes, my dear brother, I live at Chartres."

"Well, what is going on there? Are thoughtful people numerous? Has Philippe d'Orléans many friends there? In Paris, my poor Dieudonné, society is retrograding; 'La Gazette de France' plays the drum; Chateaubriand and Fitz-James have turned liberals, and many aristocrats are supporting them. Pooh! deplorable times we are living in! Would you believe that, no later than yesterday, 'La Quotidienne' quoted names of noblemen — really great nobles, men whose fathers and grandfathers rode beside kings — who are unblushingly going into trade? Dukes and marquises are becoming iron and coal merchants, and I know not what!"

"Brother," said the chevalier, "if agreeable to you, let us discuss public affairs later, and touch upon some personal matters that bring me here."

"Oh, as you please," said the baron, slightly piqued. "We will talk of whatever you like. But what is that moving beside you there in the shadow?"

"It is my dog, brother; you need n't mind him."

"And how long, my dear chevalier, has it been the fashion to make visits to an elder brother with such an escort? A dog should be in his kennel; and when he is needed or is to be shown to connoisseurs if he is of good blood, he should be brought out by his leash. He will soil my carpet."

The Baron de la Graverie's carpet, you must know, showed the warp all over its surface, and, until then, it appeared to have been indifferent to spots of all kinds.

"Have no fear, brother," humbly responded the chevalier, who quite realized the importance of giving no offence to his brother; "pay no attention to Black; he is very well-behaved, and I brought him with me because he seldom leaves me. This dog is — is my friend!"

"Odd taste you have to choose your friends from his species."

The chevalier would have liked to retort that, from the manner in which brotherhood was practised among men, one could lose nothing in cultivating a feeling of fraternity for brutes; but he resisted the temptation and held his tongue. Unfortunately, all was not ended between Black and the Baron de la Graverie.

"But, chevalier," said the latter, "just look and see what your infernal dog has between his paws!"

The chevalier turned so abruptly toward Black that the dog thought his master was inviting him forward; so, picking up the cock, which had been forgotten by everyone at the furious ringing of the baron's bell, he entered the circle of light cast around the bed, holding in his jaws the unhappy bird that he had strangled in the courtyard. It was the trade of poor Black to kill and carry home; being in the act of performing his duty, he thought he was doing well.

At the sight of his dead bird, the baron rose convulsively to a sitting posture.

"*Par la mort-diable!*" he cried, "your fool of a brute has done a fine piece of work! — a Cochin-China fowl that I had just imported from London, which cost me a round dozen of pistoles! You did well, monsieur, to come here, and to come in such company! I don't know what

keeps me from ringing up my people and ordering them to hang this cursed animal immediately!"

"Hang Dumesnil!" cried the chevalier, quite beside himself at this threat; "think well of it, my brother, before you give such an order! I have told you that this dog is my friend, and I will defend him to the death!"

The poor chevalier had risen at a bound on hearing his brother's menace; and, while returning threat for threat, he brandished his stool as if he were already confronting the enemy. His belligerent attitude greatly astonished the baron, who had always known his brother as very much of a milksop, as he called him.

"Holloa! what bee is in your bonnet, brother? I don't know you in these heroics. Do you know that you are as dangerous a guest as your dog? Well," he continued, casting a side glance at the unhappy cock which Black had laid down that he might be ready to support his master in case of need, "come, tell me quickly what you want, and put an end to this."

The chevalier set down his stool, and signalled Black to be quiet; then, collecting himself an instant, —

"Brother," said he, "I wish some news of Madame de la Graverie."

A thunderbolt falling in his bed-chamber could not have astonished the baron more than did this unexpected demand, coming from his brother's mouth.

"News of Madame de la Graverie?" he repeated. "Why, it seems to me, my dear Dieudonné, that if you have waited till now to inform yourself, it is really a little late."

"Yes, brother," humbly replied the chevalier, "yes, I confess, it would have looked better had I tried on my arrival in France to find out what had become of Mathilde; but you know how one is apt to do — other cares —"

"The care of your own person, no doubt; for from all I have heard, and judging from your florid complexion and the fat bulging from your sides and wrinkling your clothes, it is very plain that if you have been indifferent to the fate of your brother and your wife, you have not neglected your stomach."

"Yet, brother, waiving all accusations, I wish to know what happened to Mathilde after my departure for America."

"*Mon Dieu!* how should I know? I saw her only once, when it was a question of settling the matter which you had left on my hands; and I must confess I found her more considerate than I had hoped for. That woman was not lacking in good sense; she understood immediately the exceptional position in which her fault had placed her, and she lent herself with good grace to what my situation as head of the family compelled me to exact from her."

"What, then, were those conditions that you felt constrained to impose upon her?" cried the chevalier, who saw with satisfaction that his brother was anticipating the examination which he had expected to put him through.

But, unfortunately, the baron was a better diplomat than the chevalier; he perceived by the embarrassment of his younger brother that his question concealed a reservation, and, at all events, he resolved to reveal nothing of what had taken place between his sister-in-law and himself.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said he, innocently, "I can hardly remember, now; there was, as far as I can recall, the promise of no longer bearing your name, and, finally, her acquiescence in the matter of entailing upon me your fortune, in case of your dying without children."

"But," demanded the chevalier, "how could Mathilde consent to sign documents which would consign her child to poverty?"

"The very readiness with which she consented must prove, if you are still in doubt, how just and well-founded were the accusations brought against her, since she dared not defend what she should have regarded as her child's patrimony."

"And what became of her child?" demanded the chevalier, resolutely coming to the point.

"The child? How should I know that there was a child? Do you think that I had any time to spare in following a worthless woman of that sort through her amorous campaigns? She passed her confinement — I don't know where; two years later she died. I have there in my bureau the certificate of her death. Perhaps she miscarried; for it seems to me beyond question that if the child had lived, my well-known charity could not have failed to be appealed to for the maintenance of the unhappy little creature, male or female."

"Ah, well, brother, you deceive yourself," said the chevalier, piqued at the unceremoniousness with which his brother spoke of the woman whom he had loved so well. "She had a fine child; it is alive, — a tall, beautiful girl, who is, I swear, the living image of her mother."

Knowing instinctively that he was giving his brother the most grievous blow that could be inflicted upon him, the chevalier stated with assurance what he still doubted. In spite of his shrewdness and self-possession, the baron could not help turning pale.

"What young hussy has been imposing upon your credulity, brother? What you have just said is impossible!"

The chevalier then told from beginning to end the story of Thérèse. He made a mistake. The baron heard him out, then, when he had ended, he shrugged his shoulders.

"I see," said he, "that although time has modified your interior and puffed out your exterior, it has not altered your brain, my poor Dieudonné. You are a fool! Mathilde left no child, I assure you."

Whatever doubt on this subject might exist in the chevalier's mind, he would not contradict himself.

"Your pardon, brother," said he, "but, with all the respect due to you as my senior, you must allow me to believe that your affirmation cannot stand against my — "

He was about to say, "against my knowledge," but his honest nature rejected this lie; he contented himself, therefore, with saying after a second's hesitation — "against my convictions. I, on the contrary, believe that Mathilde left a child, and I am almost certain that child is the girl of whom I have just told you."

"At any rate, I presume you do not intend to impose this intruder upon our family?"

"I intend, monsieur," said the chevalier, rebelling against his brother's selfishness, "to give my name to my child as soon as I can possibly prove to the world what I am already convinced of, — that Thérèse is my daughter."

"Your daughter! You are jesting, surely, — the daughter of Lieutenant Pontfarcy!"

"My daughter, or my wife's daughter, — as you please, brother. Look you, I lay aside all question of self-esteem and fear of society; whether she is mine, or is not mine, it is no matter! Is it, Black? In the eyes of the world and by law, she will be my daughter. *Pater*

est quem nuptiæ demonstrant. I remember only that much of my Latin, but I know it well. She has a place in my heart still. I loved Mathilde so much, she gave me so much happiness, that I am willing to pay for, to buy very dearly, this living portrait which she has left behind her. So, brother, will you tell me, yes or no, what you know of her?"

"Once more, monsieur," said the baron, "I know nothing of her, absolutely nothing! But I know one thing — I will not talk any more. It is my duty as the elder, as the head of the family, to guard the honor of the name I bear; and I will not let it be compromised by your follies."

"Name is not everything in this life, brother; and we often obey the prejudices and demands of society only at the expense of the teachings of the gospel and the commandments of the Saviour of men."

"So," cried the baron, jumping up a second time in his bed, folding his arms and emphasizing with his head each syllable he uttered, — "so you are merely waiting for a proof of this girl's birth to forget that the mother dishonored your name and ruined your life; that she put you to torture, and banished you from your country? Well, listen! I will give you another proof of the woman's worthlessness. You have thought, heretofore, that Monsieur de Pontfarcy was her only lover; not so! She had two of them. The second — can you guess who he was? — that Captain Dumesnil, that Orestes to whom you played Pylades."

"I know it," simply replied the chevalier.

The baron fell back in amazement, his ear crashing, as he did so, against the head-board of his bed.

"You know it?" cried he.

The chevalier nodded.

"Ah, well, proceed! contend for your paternity in this rivalry of adulterers, if you can; forgive, if you dare!"

"I shall forgive, because it is more than my right, brother, — because it is my duty."

"As you will! I, for one, say this, monsieur; no pity is due to those who commit sins that demoralize society and lead us into an abyss such as we are in."

"You forget, brother, you who pretend, moreover, to be a religious man, — you forget that Christ said, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.' Pray, of whom was he speaking, I ask, if it was not of an adulterous woman, of a Jewish Mathilde?"

"Ah! You accept the gospel to the letter, do you?" cried the baron.

"Besides, brother," gently continued the chevalier, "leaving the gospel out of the question, I would rather have Mademoiselle Thérèse — supposing that she were only Mademoiselle Thérèse — become Mademoiselle de la Graverie than think it possible for Mademoiselle de la Graverie to remain Mademoiselle Thérèse."

"Make a nun of her, monsieur; pay her dowry out of your income, if you are so much interested in a girl from the street!"

"It is essential to Thérèse's happiness that she should have a name, and it is a name that I am hunting for her."

"But, *mort-diable!* Think of it, monsieur! The day she takes your name will also give her your fortune."

"I know it."

"And you dare to rob your family, to defraud my sons, who are your legitimate heirs, to throw away your fortune upon a child whose father you are not and cannot be?"

"What proves it?"

"The very letter that I wished to give you when I decided to inform you of your wife's misconduct, — the letter that Dumesnil dared to tear up in spite of my entreaties."

"You must remember, brother, that I did not read the letter."

"Yes; but I read it, for my part; and I can swear that in that letter Mathilde congratulated Monsieur de Pontfarcy on a paternity all the honor of which she attributed to him."

"Would you really make oath of it, on your honor as a gentleman?" asked the chevalier, who for some moments seemed lost in revery.

"On my faith as a gentleman, I swear it," said the baron.

"Very well, many thanks, brother!" said the chevalier, drawing a long breath.

"Thanks for what, pray?"

"Because you have set my conscience at rest; for since it is impossible for me to recognize poor Thérèse as my daughter, I shall do what I had already thought of doing, — that is, I will make her my wife; and, on my honor as a gentleman also, brother, I swear in my turn that in a few months from now I will present you either a fine fat nephew or a pretty little niece."

The baron bounded up furiously in his bed.

"Leave my house, monsieur!" said he. "Go, this very instant, and take heed you never set foot in it again! And if you try to execute the infamous project which you have just had the audacity to speak of, I give you my word of honor that I will use every effort to frustrate it!"

The chevalier, who was becoming more and more independent, paid scant attention to his brother's threats.

He took up his hat, whistled to Black as carelessly as he might have done in a stable, and closed the door, leaving the baron *tête à tête* with his strangled Cochin-China cock, and in a state of exasperation difficult to describe.

XXXI.

HOW THE PIRATES OF THE BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS CUT THE MOORINGS AND CARRY OFF THE CONVOY.

The plan which the Chevalier de la Graverie had just communicated to his elder brother, and which had so shocked the latter's nervous system, seemed entirely feasible to our hero; and so, in spite of the lack of success attending the labors he had accomplished in less than twelve hours, he appeared quite joyous on taking his departure from the house in the Rue Saint-Guillaume.

"The one refuses to marry that dear little angel," said he, "and the other would prevent me from giving her the name that belongs to her. Very well; I shall soon give them both a fine surprise! Faith! I was very foolish to leave Chartres, to venture out in that confounded mail-coach, where I have caught a lumbago — which I might ward off, perhaps, if I were in my right mind, by a brisk rubbing. I was very silly to come and dance attendance at the door of that selfish old fool, to risk a walk through the streets of Paris at such an unearthly hour, without clean linen, without a change of garments, without shelter, when it would have been so easy to have given at once a fortune to poor Thérèse and a paternity to her child! I will do it; yes, *pardieu!* I will do it; and monsieur, my brother, who is counting on being my heir, will draw a long face! Of course, although to the

world I am giving the poor child the name of wife, I shall never be more to her than a father — "

The chevalier had reached this point of his monologue when he heard himself called. He turned, and saw his brother's *valet de chambre* running after him, carrying a small valise on his shoulder.

"Monsieur le Chevalier! Monsieur le Chevalier!" cried the valet as he approached, "you forgot your valise!"

"My valise?" said the chevalier, halting; "why, *sac-à-papier!* I had no valise with me, — that I know of, at least."

"Nevertheless, Monsieur le Chevalier," said the valet, quite scant of breath as he caught up with the chevalier, "it was certainly the coachman who brought you that placed this little bag in the corner of the lodge; Madame Wilhem, the concierge, is sure of it."

The chevalier took the valise from the valet, turned it this way and that, and finally perceived on the upper side a card, cut in two, on which he read the following name and address: —

"Monsieur Gratien d' Elbène, officier de cavalerie, Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, No. 42."

"*Parbleu!*" cried the chevalier, "here 's a mistake for which I am not sorry; and I am certain now of finding my man again whenever it suits me."

Dieudonné thanked the *valet de chambre*, added a louis to his thanks, called a porter who placed the bag on his shoulder, and continued his way in search of a hôtel where he could rest from his fatigue. He found a hôtel in the Rue de Rivoli. He chose a room on the first floor, so as not to have too many stairs to climb, and had a huge fire lighted in it, to which he exposed his back and shoulders until they were almost cooked. After he

had installed Black on some cushions which, without compunction, he took from a sofa of Utrecht velvet adorning the room assigned to him, the chevalier put himself to bed; but, contrary to his expectation and in spite of his fatigue, he found it impossible to sleep.

While the chevalier's spirits were sustained by the excitement of the discussion with his brother, he had, as we have heard him declare to himself, decided that to wed Thérèse would be the simplest, the most natural, the most logical thing in the world; but, since chance had brought under his eye the name of the young girl's betrayer, he had begun to reflect with greater coolness; and with each new reflection, he encountered objections at which his delicacy revolted. The gravest objection was this: was it really proved that Thérèse was not his own child? And, in case she were, whatever reserve might exist in the nature of his relations with the young woman, would there not be something profoundly immoral in this union? Then, who could say that the baron had not some proof of her birth? — proof which he would withhold as long as it was his interest to do so, but which he would make public, by way of avenging himself, the day on which it could effect an incestuous scandal.

Before these two obstacles, which rose threateningly in the depths of his mind, and likewise, perhaps, of his conscience, the chevalier quickly relapsed into all his indecision and agony of perplexity. He resolved not to renounce entirely the idea, which seemed to him a sword of Damocles, good to hang over his elder brother's head; but he resolved at the same time, although it would be at the expense of his ease and love of quiet, to try everything that should secure a different sequel to the affairs of poor Thérèse. He therefore dressed himself, conceal-

ing the doubtful freshness of his shirt as well as he was able by buttoning his waistcoat to the top, and then went out, telling himself that perhaps the open air would give him the ideas that were lacking while he remained shut up in a stuffy hôtel.

As we have said, Monsieur de la Graverie was essentially a *flâneur*, and, in spite of the serious reflections to which he was a prey, he found in the streets of Paris, which he had not traversed for seventeen or eighteen years, too many of the diversions of a saunterer not to be promptly distracted from his thoughts. First, there were the omnibuses, — a new invention for Monsieur de la Graverie, who looked upon them with curiosity. Then there were the different venders, the shops of every kind, the cafés, whose luxury had, since the old times, attained such proportions as to stupefy poor Dieudonné and cause him to halt, rooted to the pavement, at every step.

Black appeared no less dazed than Monsieur de la Graverie in the midst of the crowd; he dashed off, came back, ran about with a bewildered air, jostled by this one, stopped by that, losing his master every five minutes; then, with head high and nose in air, he would go down the street, entering every door that he found open, sniffing at every passer-by, disappearing, reappearing, and again disappearing so entirely and so often that he began to cause the chevalier the keenest anxiety.

"*Par la sambleu!*" said he, "if he keeps this up, I shall lose my dog. It is singular how, from the very day on which he is subjected to metempsychosis, a man adopts the habits of the body that God has given him to inhabit. Who the devil, I ask, would recognize Dumesnil, the sober captain of Grenadiers, in this dog that is running about like a fool, instead of prudently keeping at my side?"

These reflections inspired the chevalier with the ingenious idea of buying a leash; he snapped its catch into the ring of the spaniel's collar, and leading the animal by this tow-line, he continued his peregrinations throughout the streets of Paris, where, like a new Christopher Columbus, he seemed to advance from discovery to discovery.

Black, relieved of all responsibility, appeared to be enchanted with this new mode of travelling, and he followed his master without opposing the slightest resistance.

However, as evening approached without Monsieur de la Graverie's having decided upon any line of conduct, he thought it high time to satisfy the cravings of his stomach. With this end in view, his first idea had been to betake himself either to Véry's, or to the Frères-Provençaux, or, again, to the Rocher-de-Cancale, which had lingered in his memory like gastronomic flavors; but he observed a restaurant covered with so much gilding and sculpture that he thought the cuisine of the establishment must be in keeping with its elegant exterior. He entered, therefore, and ordered dinner for himself and Black, — a dinner which he found detestable, but which Black, less exacting than his master, ate without a frown.

The chevalier called for his bill. During his absence the bill had changed name; it was called the "addition." Monsieur de la Graverie made a slight grimace while verifying the footing-up of the "addition;" he had eaten, or rather they had served him, a dinner for thirty-nine francs and sixty centimes, which in his culinary estimation, was not worth a crown, omitting the wine.

We must confess, with our customary frankness, that, during the dinner, Monsieur de la Graverie, who had

thought fit to make some suggestions to the waiter, — first, on the way in which he closed the door of his cabinet, without getting him to close it more softly; then he commented on each dish which the same waiter served him, charging him to explain to the *chef* that the tomato sauce ought, in its preparing, to have one third onions and two thirds tomatoes; that the *fricandeau* should be browned on both sides; that the crawfish ought to be cooked in Bordeaux wine, which did not turn sour over the fire like the Châblis, and should be served warm in their sauce instead of cold and dry on a bed of parsley,— we must confess, we say, that in setting forth these gastronomic theories for the very great advantage of those who might come after him to refresh themselves in the same restaurant, Monsieur de la Graverie had emptied one bottle of chambertin *grand cru*, and a half-bottle of Château-Lafitte, back from the Indies. This excess was not in accordance with his custom. He went out, therefore, very much heated, and resumed his walk along the boulevard, holding the leash at whose extremity Black marched, and which for greater security he had twisted around his hand.

The chevalier was in a very bad humor. He had endured but indifferently the inconveniences of a sleepless night seasoned with a dialogue full of conflicting emotions; the bad bed in which he had endeavored to rest had added to his fatigue instead of alleviating it. The draughts of air circulating throughout the room had found him almost indifferent; but the dinner he had just made exasperated him; and he asked himself if it would not be prudent for him to return as quickly as possible to his good town of Chartres, where, however great his annoyances, he had at least the resource of a passable dinner, and the society, so dear to his heart,

of Thérèse. Since the baron, and since Gratien, both of them, had refused to do what he had come to ask of them, why need he prolong his stay in Paris?

The chevalier was threading his way through the crowd which between seven and eight o'clock throngs the Boulevard des Italiens, while addressing these reflections to himself, and he accompanied them with gestures that drew upon him more than one imprecation from the people against whom, in his distraction, he stumbled in passing, — imprecations to which the worthy chevalier did not take the trouble even to respond. At length, the crowd becoming more and more dense, Monsieur de la Graverie was seized with one of those fits of indignation so common among provincials when they have to stem the surging flood of Parisian idlers; and, turning his heels to all the rabble, he reached a decision, and resolved that he would go back to Chartres, seeking first to regain his hôtel, which seemed to be an indispensable step in his journey.

"Yes," grumbled he between his teeth, "I am leaving you forever, corrupt and accursed city! I am going to shut myself up in my home, with my poor Thérèse, who shall be my adopted daughter, since I cannot make her either my wife or my real daughter; and I swear that if the law were to eat up half my fortune in the process, I will leave her, in spite of my brother, enough money to live at her ease when I shall be no more. There! be tranquil, Dumesnil!"

Up to that time the chevalier had gesticulated with his left hand; his right, which held Black's leash, had remained thrust into his pocket. But this time, carried away by the warmth of his oratorical vigor, it was the right which was raised on high, as if to call Heaven to witness the oath he was making to himself and to his

friend. To his great surprise, he found then that there was nothing at the other end of the leather strand which was dangling from his hand. The chevalier turned. Black was neither beside him nor behind him! He approached a street-lamp and examined the leash closely. It had been neatly cut by a sharp instrument. His dog had been stolen.

The chevalier's first impulse was to run and call Black. But whither should he run? In what direction should he call? Then, if he called, how could he make his voice heard above the noisy din of wheels and the deafening murmur of the multitude?

Monsieur de la Graverie began to question the passers-by. Some answered his questions, made in earnest, broken tones, by shrugging their shoulders; others told him they did not know. A man in a blouse asserted that he had seen a person leading a dog by a pocket handkerchief slipped through its collar; he was dragging the dog down the Rue Vivienne; the dog was hanging back, and it was only by much tugging that the man pulled him along. The dog, too, resembled point for point the description given by the chevalier of his spaniel.

"Quickly, then, to the Rue Vivienne!" said the chevalier, hastening in the direction indicated.

"Oh, he has the start of you, and I doubt whether you catch him, my dear monsieur! If, as I am almost certain, your animal has been stolen by one of those fellows who make a business of stealing and selling dogs, he is already in a place of safety."

"But where can I find him? How can I get him back?"

"You must first report to the police."

"Very good; and then?"

"Advertise, promise a reward."

"As large as one can wish, providing I find my dog."

"Come, come!" said the man, touched by the chevalier's grief, "you must n't look so distressed; you will find your dog again, and if it is n't the same one, it will be another. And, too, I can promise you one thing; and that is, however small your reward may be, to-morrow morning before breakfast you will see two dogs just like yours at the front door."

"But it is my dog that I want, my own dog and no other! You do not know, my good man, how I value my dog. Ah, if I should lose him a second time, my poor Dumesnil, I believe I should die!"

"Dumesnil! Is your dog called Dumesnil? That's an odd name for a dog! One would say it was a man's name. Come, do not be uneasy! Paris is large, but I know its ins and outs. Have you confidence in me?"

"Yes, my friend, yes," cried the chevalier.

"Very well; I will look for your dog myself. To-day is Friday; well, then, Sunday, before noon, I will undertake to have Monsieur Dumesnil safe and sound at the end of your strap; only, when you walk again with him in Paris, put a chain on him; it is heavier, but is more secure."

"If you do that, if you are the means of my finding Black —"

"Who is Black?"

"Why, he is my dog."

"Come! I must understand; what is your dog's name? Is it Dumesnil, or is it Black?"

"Black, my friend, Black; only, for me, just for me alone, he is sometimes Dumesnil and sometimes Black."

"Good! I understand; he has a family name and a baptismal name."

"Well," resumed the chevalier, proceeding to complete

his offer, "if you bring him back to me, I will give whatever you ask, my good fellow. What do you say to five hundred francs, — do you think that would be enough?"

"Come, come! I am not such a freebooter as the ones that stole your dog, my dear monsieur. You can pay for my time and trouble; because, while I am chasing after your dog and my legs are working, my arms will be doing nothing, and it is my arms that get my living. The price of my time is all that I want; I oblige you for the sake of obliging. It makes me feel badly, it does, to see you so cut up over a lost dog; it proves that you have a kind heart, and I love kind hearts. So we will say no more about the reward; we will settle when the animal is found."

"But you will need money, my friend, to hire cabs, to pay the bill-sticker, the printer, the stationer. Let me advance you something at least."

"The bill-sticker! The printer! The stationer! Oh, yes! I told you all that a little while ago, because we were not then acquainted; but all that is mere clap-trap, and we will pass it over."

"But still, my friend — "

"Let Pierre Marteau alone, my kind old gentleman, let him alone! He knows what he is saying. Don't give the alarm to any one; be as dumb as a little fish under a stone, and I repeat that on Sunday, not later than Sunday, you shall have your spaniel."

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" sighed the chevalier; "Sunday, that is a long time! I hope they will give him something to eat between now and then!"

"Well, well! I do not say that he will find as fat a larder as in your house; but a dog is a dog, when all is said and done, and while so many people eat crusts, we need not waste pity on a beast that has potatoes!"

"When shall I see you again, my honest fellow?"

"To-morrow, because to-night I shall be beating about the saloons where the scum of the boulevards gathers; perhaps in this way I may get news of your dog before Sunday. You, my dear monsieur, look tired; go to bed and rest easy. Where do you stay?"

"At the Hôtel de Londres, Rue de Rivoli."

"Rue de Rivoli? I know the place, although it is not one of my haunts. Shall I conduct you back? For you look as if you were picking your way like a snipe in a fog. Here, come this way."

The chevalier, as obedient as a child, followed Pierre Marteau, and, as they went along, ten times did he renew his injunctions with regard to Black. Having reached the door of the hôtel, he succeeded in making the other accept a twenty-franc piece to facilitate his search; then he made an appointment for the next day, and sadly withdrew to his room.

The chevalier sat down upon the cushions on which Black had slept the night before, and, although there was no fire on the hearth, he remained there more than an hour lost in his reflections. The reflections were of a sombre hue, and the longer the chevalier pondered, the sadder they became.

From the hour when Dieudonné had taken up this attachment, he had gone from trouble to trouble, from deception to deception; he dared not reckon up all the misadventures that Black had cost him; and when he thought of the poor dog's mistress, the addition of her griefs presented a very formidable total! And yet, strange thing! he loved his griefs; his afflictions were sweet to him; the troubles that he had endured for the two beings he loved were so dear to him that, even while he railed at them, he never dreamed of regretting

the period when, free from care, he had lived wholly absorbed in the workings of his digestion or in the study of the science of Carême. He went to bed at last, sighing as he looked about the room, which seemed now twice as empty and dreary as in the morning; and he went to sleep, dreaming that he saw, as he had seen a few hours before, the black silhouette of his spaniel outlined against the glowing embers on the hearth. Alas! it was a dream! there was no longer either fire or spaniel in the room. His mind was so overcome, his body so wearied by the tortures it had undergone during the last twenty-four hours, that in the end he slept soundly.

It must have been ten o'clock in the morning when the noise of hob-nailed shoes awakened the chevalier. He opened his eyes, and perceived standing at the foot of his bed the man who, on the evening before, had promised to find Black for him.

But, unhappily, Pierre Marteau brought him as yet nothing but hopes, and very hollow ones at that. He had unavailingly explored the entire quarter of Saint Marceau, where the men who make a business out of stray dogs can ordinarily be found. He had learned nothing. However, he was far from discouraged; and, without offering any explanation, he continued to promise the chevalier that on the following Sunday he would put him in possession of his spaniel. And he took his leave.

Then the chevalier wondered with a sigh how he should employ the day. It was impossible for him to think of returning to Chartres before recovering his dog. He wrote to Thérèse, who must have been very anxious about him to take the diligence or the mail-coach on the following Sunday, and join him at the Hôtel de Londres, Rue de Rivoli. Then he wrote to his notary to send him some money. Finally, as he

could not easily spend the whole day in his room, he dressed and decided to go out for a stroll, in order to kill time, as he had done on the preceding morning. Just as he was taking up his hat, which lay on a chair, he noticed in the corner the little valise that he had unwittingly carried away on leaving the Hôtel des Postes.

"Hold!" he exclaimed, "here is employment already provided for my day. I will return this valise to its owner, and — who knows? — when his friend Louville is no longer at hand, perhaps I shall be able to make him realize the unworthiness of his conduct."

Upon this, Monsieur de la Graverie signalled a cab, entered it with the valise, and directed the coachman, —

"Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, No. 42."

XXXII.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FACE WITH WHISKERS AND ONE WITH MOUSTACHES.

A VERY grand establishment was the Hôtel d'Elbène, one that had been built quite recently by a fashionable architect, and decorated on the exterior by a profusion of statues and carvings which were not perhaps in the best taste, but which conveyed a high idea of the wealth of its proprietor. Two Corinthian columns framed an oaken *porte-cochère*, all covered with arabesques and flutings; this opened on a passage that was glazed, and paved with wood in order to deaden the noise of carriages. At the end of the passage was a court, in which were the stables and coach-houses; still farther on, was a garden overlooking the Champs-Élysées. On a level with the passage, at the right, was the lodge of the concierge; at the left, and enclosed by panes of stained glass, was the hall of a grand staircase ascending to the apartments; a soft carpet covered the stairs.

The Chevalier de la Graverie alighted from the cab, and, halting before the lodge, he said: —

"Monsieur d'Elbène?"

"Does monsieur wish to see the father or the son?" responded the concierge.

"The son, my friend."

The servant gave three strokes on a gong; a footman descended the staircase and appeared at the glass door.

"A gentleman to see Monsieur le Baron," said the concierge.

The footman preceded Monsieur de la Graverie, and ushered him into an elegant suite of apartments on the entresol, and opened the salon. There he begged him to wait a few moments, while he went to inform his master.

The chevalier, like a man who uses his time to the best advantage, began to warm his feet, which his journey in the cab had singularly chilled; then, being installed beside the fire with his heels on the fender, he threw a glance about him.

Monsieur de la Graverie, himself of high rank in life, was not surprised at the luxury of the apartment in which he found himself, although the refinements of this luxury tending especially to comfort were quite new for a man of that period; yet what did strike him, what caught his eye, what appeared strange to him, was the character of the pamphlets scattered upon a table within his reach, — pamphlets which seemed hardly in keeping with Gratien's character, whose thoughtlessness and levity he had been able to discern in a single brief but serious conversation. These brochures treated of political economy, the higher philosophy, social science. They were not for display. All were cut; many of them exhibited marks of daily use; moreover, on the margin of some Monsieur de la Graverie perceived notes, which he read, and which were too profound to have come from the head, and to have been traced by the pencil, of a young cavalry officer.

"That devil of a footman must have made a mistake," muttered Monsieur de la Graverie, "and instead of showing me to the son's apartments, he has brought me to the father's. Shall I take advantage of the chance, and ex-

pose the situation to him? It would be dangerous, for as yet I can assert nothing concerning the position of Thérèse. She has no name; and if my brother stands out, perhaps it would be hard for me to give the poor child my fortune. Then, to tell the father everything would perhaps be adding more difficulties to those with which I am already encumbered."

Monsieur de la Graverie had reached this point in his reflections when a portière was lifted and gave admission to a young man, who came forward without being heard by the chevalier, the thickness of the carpet muffling the sound of his footsteps.

"You wish to speak with me, monsieur?" said the young man.

Monsieur de la Graverie arose from the arm-chair in which he had ensconced himself, — an act due much more to the effect of the surprise he experienced than to politeness. In fact, it was to all appearance Gratien d'Elbène who stood before him; it was his very face, his height, his figure, his features, the tones of his voice; yet there was about the face of the new-comer one thing which struck the chevalier immediately, and which he clearly recalled he had not seen on that of the officer. A pair of whiskers enframed the young man's face, the rest of which was clean shaven. Since that morning the moustache and imperial could have disappeared, but the whiskers could not have been grown.

"It is, however, Monsieur Gratien d'Elbène whom I have the honor of addressing?" asked the chevalier, embarrassed by this unforeseen incident. The chevalier, as we know, was easily embarrassed.

The young man smiled; the word "however" explained all to him. "No, monsieur," he replied, "I am Henri d'Elbène; my brother Gratien is out. He has

gone to breakfast with some comrades of the garrison. But if I can give him a message for you, command me, monsieur."

"Henri! Ah, you are Henri d'Elbène!" cried the chevalier, a prey to visible emotion; for before his eyes stood the man whom Thérèse had loved so well, the only one she had ever loved, and he comprehended how easily the young girl had been duped by the extraordinary resemblance.

"Yes, monsieur," answered the young man, smiling; "Gratien has no doubt spoken to you of me, and, in spite of what he has said, you are astonished at our resemblance. The likeness goes still further; we are twins."

"I understand," said the chevalier; "but pardon my emotion. This likeness, which I had forgotten although I was told of it, has awakened within me the memory of an event which has weighed upon my life so cruelly that I cannot think of it without being for the moment very much moved."

"In fact, monsieur, you are trembling. Recover yourself, I pray, and be seated again."

Henri himself took a chair, and sat down at the other side of the fireplace. "In a little while," he said, "you can tell me what brings you."

"There is no need to wait; and since, monsieur, I do not find your brother," stoutly remarked the chevalier, much emboldened by the gentle look of kindness on the young man's face, "ah, well, I wish to tell you my story. I am a poor, lonely, old man, without relatives, without friends; your face is thoughtful and serious, extraordinarily so for your age — "

"I have suffered, monsieur," interrupted Henri, with an expression of countenance intended for a smile; "I

have paid very dearly for *l'expérience du cœur*, which ages its victims most rapidly, and also by which they profit the least."

"Ah, well," continued the chevalier, "young as you are, in years at least, perhaps you can give me advice. At my age, the mind is indolent and the will slow to act; Besides I will freely acknowledge that I have always been a person of irresolute character."

"Speak, then, monsieur," said the young man, "and although I cannot think that my advice is likely to be of service to you, yet be assured that my sympathy is enlisted, and that it will not be my fault if it is unfruitful."

The chevalier collected himself a moment; then, regarding his companion fixedly, —

"What do you think," said he, "of a man who, taking advantage of a resemblance as unusual as that between you and your brother, by the help of a disguise, of darkness, or of any other means, deceives an unfortunate young girl, and, passing himself off for the one she loves, takes advantage of the mistake to ruin her, and then abandons her to her despair?"

"In my opinion, monsieur, if such a man exists, he is a wretch worthy of the scorn of all honest men."

"And if this young girl, as a result of the crime, becomes a mother?"

"Monsieur, there are, unhappily, crimes which do not fall within reach of the law; but I swear on my honor as a gentleman that I would rather a hundred times take the hand of the ruffian who, poignard in belt, pistol in hand, breaks into a house and robs it while endangering his liberty, and commits murder at the risk of his life, than to come in contact with a man so heartless, so faithless, and so destitute of honor, as to commit an act like that of which you speak."

"Ah, well, monsieur," said the chevalier, "that is my story; the betrayed girl, a child so tender, so sweet, and good that one cannot see her without loving her, is my daughter, monsieur."

"Your daughter?"

"My adopted daughter, at least."

"And you have not dealt out a just retribution? You have not killed the man who has brought dishonor on your house?"

"As I have said, monsieur, I am almost an old man, — I am more than fifty years old; I am feeble; my unsteady hand has hardly the strength to support the weight of sword or pistol — "

"God would have given you strength, monsieur, for God would have been on your side!" cried Henri, with inspiring enthusiasm. "God is the father that avenges a child's honor; he gives courage to the sparrow defending its little ones against the bird of prey; would he fail a man who is fulfilling his duty in a most holy and sacred cause?"

"But duelling is forbidden by all laws, divine and human."

"The duel, monsieur, — and it is a misfortune, but one that we must accept, — the duel will stand as the law of God so long as society does not establish any other basis of settlement; so long as human justice does not search the heart of each to uproot its evil and recompense its good. The duel, in short, will be necessary so long as the social world finds it lawful and sometimes pleasant that a man shall assail a young girl's virtue and a wife's honor."

"Then, monsieur, if the culprit obstinately denies the young girl the reparation due to her, you advise me to call him out?"

"On my soul and my conscience, monsieur," answered Henri, "I do advise it!"

"Then, monsieur, I must confess," resumed Monsieur de la Graverie, "although, as I have just told you, my habits are peaceful, although I have spent the better part of my life occupied solely with my own well-being, that was what I also thought, and what I should have decided upon had not one fear held me back."

"Fear of what?"

"I am the only dependence of this poor child; notwithstanding what you have said, Heaven is not always on the side of right; fate might betray me. What would become of the poor girl if I were to fail her?"

"In that case, monsieur," answered Henri, simply, "I would try to make up your loss to her."

"Do you promise me that, monsieur?"

"I swear it."

"Well, monsieur," said the chevalier, with an excitement very foreign to his usual manner, "there is so much frankness, such nobility, such loyalty in your look, that I believe you, and I have decided — ah, well, yes, I swear in turn that the guilty shall be punished. But I shall be forced to ask of your courtesy another service."

"What is it, monsieur? Say the word."

"I have no acquaintances in Paris, and do not know to whom to go if you should refuse my request: I would ask you to act as my second."

"Willingly, monsieur."

"You will further swear that, no matter who is my adversary, nor what the mode of fighting adopted, you will not abandon me in the sacred mission I have undertaken? As you must have perceived, monsieur, I am very inexperienced in this sort of thing, and since you have been good enough to make my course clear with

your advice, I wish to be assured that your support will not fail me at the decisive moment."

"You have my word on this matter as on the others, monsieur. But, pardon me, there is an important detail I must ask you about. You are my brother's friend, it seems; but I have not the honor of knowing you myself: would you be so kind as to give me your name, and to leave me your address?"

"I am the Chevalier de la Graverie, — a chevalier of the Order of Saint-Louis, as you see; my house is at Chartres, but at present I am to be found at the Hôtel de Londres, Rue de Rivoli."

"Very well, monsieur; when you have need of me, let me know, and I am quite at your service."

"I thank you, and beg of you to keep this matter secret."

"I pledge my word upon it. But, by the way, you have not yet told me, monsieur, what brought you to see my brother. Will you not charge me with a message for him?"

"It is of no consequence, monsieur. I came merely to return him this valise, which he left yesterday in the mail-coach, and which my cabman carried off by mistake."

The chevalier arose.

"Thank you in Gratien's name," said the young man. "Good-by, monsieur, and be assured that my good wishes follow you in the duty that you are about to perform."

Henri insisted upon conducting the chevalier to the *porte-cochère*, and gave him a final hand-clasp when he had seen him installed in his *fiacre*.

Monsieur de la Graverie's heart beat very high; his feelings were keen and profound; from time to time a

chill coursed through his frame, a cloud passed before his eyes, and his hair stood on end. A first duel at fifty years could not but produce, we must admit, some effect.

"Ah, if Dumesnil were only here!" murmured the chevalier, with a sigh; "he went to a duel as I would go to breakfast, and handled sword and pistol as I handle my fork. But, unhappily, he is not here, and Black could not be pitted against Gratien: since the dog of Montargis, such a duel has not been witnessed; besides, Black is at large."

"Where are you going, monsieur?" demanded the cabman.

"Ah, yes, where am I going — that is true! I do not know."

"What! monsieur does not know where he is going?"

"No. Pray ask the concierge to come to me a moment."

The concierge, summoned by the coachman, advanced respectfully. He had seen Monsieur Henri accompany the visitor to his cab.

"Friend," asked the chevalier, "do you know where I can find Monsieur Gratien d'Elbène at this hour?"

"You will find him, monsieur, at the smoking-room of the Hollandais, whose divans he never quits as long as he is on leave."

"Then, coachman, to the Hollandais!" cried the chevalier, in a tone which the late Dumesnil would not have disavowed, "and drive fast! You shall have *pourboire*."

XXXIII.

IN WHICH IT IS SEEN THAT "PÉKINS" SOMETIMES INDULGE IN A QUARRELSOME POSSET.

The Hollandais was at this period a general rendezvous for officers on leave. All who wore epaulets, from subaltern to colonel inclusively, met together under the gilded roof of this convivial establishment. All military rendezvous were appointed there, just as the rendezvous of comedians were appointed for the garden of the Palais Royal. An officer, quitting his camp to go to Algeria, would say to the comrades he was leaving in France: —

"On my next six months' leave, in two years, we shall meet at the Hollandais."

And, unless the balls of the Kabyles or the dysentery should have decided otherwise, he seldom failed to keep his engagement.

And yet, in spite of its military prestige, the Hollandais smoking-room presented an appearance quite *bourgeois*. With the exception of pupils from the Polytechnic Schools and from Saint-Cyr, who frequented the Hollandais for the sake of fashion, one never saw there shako, red trousers, or uniform. The soldier, although affecting great contempt for the *pékin*, displays a singular affection for the citizen's coat, — probably for the sole reason that to him it is an unsuccessful passion. In reality, the fascinating officer who deserves every epithet

of distinction and elegance when adorned with his Hussar's jacket or coat, becomes merely an ordinary man, often less than ordinary, when he resumes the classic redingote, and exchanges the rakish military cap or glittering helmet for the common tile. Recall what the Turks once were, and what they are now, since, in pursuance of the spirit of progress, Mehemet has imposed on them the blue coat and red cap. Then — and this is the extenuating circumstance — the officer, to whom few occasions present themselves for wearing his citizen's garments, keeps them with the religious care which the soldier bestows upon his *bazar;* so that he makes them outlast the ordinary wearing limits of coats and overcoats, — and the result is that, when he does wear them, he looks like an old fashion-plate out for a walk.

If few uniforms made their appearance at the Hollandais, one noticed, on the other hand, at each table a great many coats of an entirely original cut, not a few outlandish cravats, and not a few trousers *à la* Cossack, which fashion has since wisely repudiated. It was, in a word, easy for any one to see that this establishment was patronized entirely by officers more or less disguised in citizen's dress. A dense tobacco smoke filled the atmosphere, already overcharged with the vapors rising from innumerable bowls of punch, the usual beverage of the *habitués.*

Five or six of these last, who, by the spurs retained on their boots, could be recognized for cavalry officers, were grouped in the right-hand corner on the garden side. They had breakfasted in the café, and had breakfasted well, judging from their animated conversation. As usual, these gentlemen were discussing an inexhaustible subject, — the merit of the different garrisons and their comparison one with another.

"Ah, messieurs," said our old acquaintance, Lieutenant Louville, whom we discover in the heart of this group, "*vive* Tours in Touraine! — first, as the garden of France, as those idiots the poets say; but, after all, a pretty town, — excellent prunes, a passable theatre, charming grisettes. Tours is the gem of garrisons!"

"Faith, my dear fellow," replied a pot-bellied officer, with a red face and gray moustaches cut like a brush, "I have 'done' Tours. I stayed there two years, and, I swear, Tours is no better than other garrisons."

"Good! and why do you say that, captain?"

"Because I believe that after the first two months have rolled away, one is as much bored in one place as in another."

"I like the North fairly well," put in a third speaker; "there we have contraband tobacco, excellent to smoke, and, faith! not dear."

"And there is Pontivy, messieurs!" cried a fourth, — "a perfect *pension*, only forty-five francs a month."

"And you, Gratien, your preference?"

"My opinion," answered Gratien, "is that the more I go about, the more I recognize the fact that of all the garrisons through which we have passed not one of them is bearable; which encourages me vastly to keep the promise I have made myself of throwing up my commission, that I may never leave the only good and the only charming garrison town that exists — which is Paris."

"Yes," said Louville, "your preference can be understood, in fact, when one's father is, like yours, several times a millionnaire; and yet I doubt if in spite of all his millions, in spite of all the pleasures of Paris, you forget the happy hours that you have spent in the regiment."

"Where, and when?" demanded Gratien.

"Ingrate! Everywhere and always! Stay! to go no further than that dreadful town of Chartres, — Autricum, Carnutum, — did you not have the most delightful adventure with that little Thérèse, — an adventure worthy of Lovelace, rascal?"

"Come, Louville," said Gratien, visibly affected, "don't speak of that! I assure you that the memory of it is, on the contrary, extremely disagreeable."

"Why? Because that old fool, under the pretext that you had taken the first fruits of the young girl's heart, wished to force you, the Baron Gratien d'Elbène, to wed a grisette without a sou? Ah, he was really amusing, the good man! He was well wound up for my benefit, especially after you had left the inside of the cab — Why, *mille cigares!*" cried Louville, bounding from his seat, "there he is — there he is, just coming in! Ah, we shall have some fun! Look, messieurs, at that adorable figure! Just see now with what a bellicose air our soldier of Louis XV. brandishes his umbrella! This way, monsieur!"

"No foolishness, Louville," said the pot-bellied officer. "This good man, you must not forget, has two titles to your respect, — his age, which is twice yours; and the red ribbon that he wears in his button-hole."

"Bah! the cross of Saint-Louis!"

"It is always paid for with blood, Louville; and it is not becoming for other soldiers to laugh at one who wears it."

"Let me alone, now, captain! He is some refugee, some one escaped from the Royal Cravat, who has earned his ribbon by standing on one foot in antechambers. Faith, I have too much fun laughing at him, to let slip such a precious opportunity."

Then, facing the Chevalier de la Graverie, who having

recognized them was making his way in their direction, and, rising, with a step toward him, Louville continued:

"I am delighted, monsieur, to see you again. I hope your adventure of night before last has not injured your health, or dulled your sparkling wit?"

"No, monsieur," said the chevalier, smilingly, "as you see — aside from a little touch of lumbago, I am perfectly well."

"Ah, I am so glad! You will not, then, refuse to take a seat in our midst, and drink to the health of the charming Thérèse, of whom we were just speaking, — at the very moment when you entered."

"Really, monsieur," answered the chevalier, with his imperturbable smile; "you do me too much honor, and I am unable to refuse."

"Would you like a glass of this punch? It is excellent, and just the thing to chase black clouds from the spirits and fog from the stomach."

"A thousand thanks, my dear monsieur; but being a mild and peaceable man, I especially fear alcoholic drinks."

"They make you quarrelsome, perhaps?"

"Quite so."

"Come, Gratien, be more cordial to the chevalier; for, from your ribbon, monsieur, I do not hesitate to give you that title."

"In truth, Monsieur Louville, it belongs to me twice over. I am a chevalier by rank, and a chevalier — by preferment."

"Well, chevalier, you should know that your friend Gratien has had his head in the clouds for two days. I believe, myself, if you would like me to tell you, that he is thinking over the marriage proposition that you made him."

"Monsieur Gratien would do marvellously well to think of it," responded the chevalier, with perfect good-humor.

"Yes," answered Louville; "but there is nothing worse than such an idea for dulling the wit of a bright lad. Let us see, what will you have, chevalier? A glass of lemonade, an orgeat, a gooseberry? Ah, a milk-posset perhaps?"

"Exactly, monsieur, a milk-posset."

"Garçon!" cried Louville, "a posset for monsieur, very hot and very sweet." Then, turning to the chevalier: "Now, monsieur, if, indeed, it is not indiscreet to make such a demand, kindly tell us what brings you into this den, known as the Hollandais? It is not your usual haunt, I presume."

"You are right, monsieur; and I really admire your keenness of insight."

"I am glad to know that you do me justice."

"I came, monsieur, in the hope of meeting Monsieur Gratien, whom I did not find at his house."

"Ah, you took the trouble to go there?" demanded Gratien, with surprise.

"Yes, Monsieur le Baron; and from your concierge I learned that if the Hollandais was not my regular haunt, it was yours."

"Really," interrupted Louville, "you came to meet Gratien? That proves that you have not renounced your idea. Ah, well, so much the better! I like obstinate people, myself; and, faith, I will go over to your side, so lively is the sympathy with which you inspire me. Look here, as the case stands, it can only be a question of the marriage contract; very well, let us discuss the conditions. Gratien, you can have the first word, my friend. What have you to advance? How

much in real estate; how much in government bonds; how much in railroad stocks; how much in Garat-funds?"

"Louville," returned Gratien, "I beg of you, very seriously, not to prolong this pleasantry, which has already lasted too long. I have given monsieur my decision; to insist displays an astonishing want of taste in one as old and as much a man of the world as the chevalier. On the other hand, to make a jest as you are doing of the fate of a young girl whom, after all, I must pity, would be on my part a lack of delicacy and of feeling. Reflect on what I have just said, monsieur; reflect on it, Louville, — and I hope that you will both be of my mind."

"No," returned the Chevalier de la Graverie, "I think, on the contrary, that Monsieur Louville has made some very sensible remarks, quite to the point; so that instead of bearing him ill-will, I am infinitely grateful."

"There, you see, Gratien! Come, now, say something, and lay aside this tragic air; since monsieur — monsieur himself, the champion of Mademoiselle Thérèse — is the first to urge you! You are silent? See here, Monsieur le Chevalier, if you speak first, perhaps that will set him going. Begin, then, my dear monsieur; expatiate upon the riches of your *protégée*, and do the thing up well; for I warn you that our friend Gratien, for all he is a sub-lieutenant as you know, is rich, very rich. But pardon, here is the boy bringing you the posset ordered. Drink, monsieur, drink first; it will lend its sweetness to your proposals."

The chevalier smilingly listened to this flow of words. He slowly stirred with his spoon the beverage that was set before him, carried it to his lips, swallowed it gravely, replaced the glass upon the table, wiped his mouth very

carefully with a cambric handkerchief, and, turning to Gratien, —

"Monsieur," said he, "I have reflected on the proposition that I had thought proper to make you, and I have come to the conclusion that it would be absurd for me to set a price on an action so just, loyal, and entirely natural, to the contemplation of which I summoned your conscience."

"Nothing could be simpler, *pardieu!*" interrupted Louville.

"To endow Thérèse — and observe that I can do it," continued the chevalier — "would be an affront to your delicacy; and I should not be surprised if the proposal I made you had been the sole cause of the refusal with which you met my advances. To-day, monsieur, I came to say, on the contrary, Thérèse has no name, Thérèse is without fortune; but you have dishonored her, — you have dishonored her, not by following the lead of a mutual attachment, but by calling to your aid the most odious, the most cowardly of subterfuges! You cannot, then, hesitate to obey the imperious voice of duty."

"Bravo! Those are irresistible arguments. Come, your turn, Gratien, — plead your cause; it is not a good one, I warn you. Imagine yourself before the jury, and that I am your judge."

"My answer will be brief, dear friend," said Gratien, with a certain dignity. "I will say to Monsieur le Chevalier, —" the young man bowed slightly, — "I will say that his insults will find my determination as immovable as his promises. However rich Mademoiselle Thérèse may be, however poor she may be, matters little to me; and, I will add, it is extremely fortunate for him that his head is white, as otherwise I should feel obliged to respond quite differently to a certain portion of his speech."

"*Mon Dieu!* you need have no scruples, my dear monsieur," said the chevalier, tranquilly. "Whether my head be white or gray need matter little to you, provided it agrees to take its place at the end of your pistol or at the point of your sword."

"Ah, hear that! do you note, Gratien, that the good man is challenging you?"

"Then, it is another matter," said Gratien.

The chevalier turned towards him, the same smile still upon his lips.

"It was," continued the young man, "with the positive intention of offending me that you pronounced those words a moment ago?"

"I am not at all concerned as to whether they offend or do not offend you, monsieur," said the chevalier; "I chose them because they accurately characterized your conduct, that is all."

"In a word, monsieur, you came here to the Hollandais, to-day, Saturday, with the intention of saying to me in the presence of my comrades: 'Marry Mademoiselle Thérèse or fight'?"

"Precisely, Monsieur le Baron." Then, tapping his glass with his spoon, "Garçon!" he cried, "another posset."

"No!" cried Gratien.

"No what?"

"A duel with you would be too ridiculous."

"Ah! do you think so?"

"Yes."

"You think it would be ridiculous to kill an old man, who on the whole is very well able to thrust a sword into your bosom or to lodge a ball in your head; and it does not seem to you, as it does to me, cowardly and infamous to employ a disgusting subterfuge to destroy more than

life, — the only thing I am risking in fighting with you, — to destroy the honor of a defenceless young girl? Truly, you are wanting in logic, Monsieur Gratien. — Thanks, waiter."

The last words were addressed, in fact, to the waiter, who set down before the chevalier his second posset.

"Ah, well, so be it," said Gratien, after a moment's reflection, and more exasperated perhaps by the chevalier's tranquillity than by the insults that he had repeated, — "so be it, since you wish it absolutely."

"You will marry Thérèse?"

"No, monsieur; but I will kill you."

"Oh, that, monsieur," said the chevalier, turning his posset from the decanter into his glass, without his hand's displaying the least nervousness, — "that is a question. Let us wait till to-morrow to solve it, young man, and do not say what you *will* do; who foretells the future runs a risk of being disappointed. Then it is quite settled that we fight?"

"Yes, certainly, we fight," answered Gratien, his teeth set with anger, "unless you retract the words that you have just uttered."

And, in fact, Gratien left open this last door to the chevalier, consenting with regret, as he did, to this duel, whose odious and ridiculous nature he fully understood.

"Retract!" said the chevalier, carrying his glass to his lips and slowly drinking his second posset. "Oh, you hardly know me, my dear Monsieur Gratien! I am a long time in deciding, but, having once made up my mind, I imitate William the Conqueror and burn my ships."

And, pronouncing these words, the chevalier dashed into Gratien's face the posset remaining in his glass.

The young officer was about to rush upon the old man;

but his friends, Louville first of all, grasped him by the arms and held him back.

"Your seconds! your seconds, monsieur!" shouted Gratien.

"To-morrow morning they will arrange the meeting with yours, monsieur."

"Where?"

"Shall we appoint a rendezvous at the Tuileries, Terrasse des Feuillants, opposite the Hôtel de Londres, at which I am staying, between the hour of noon and one o'clock?"

"Your arms?"

"Ah, monsieur, for a soldier, you are ignorant of the first rules of duelling. My arms? That concerns neither you nor me; it concerns our seconds. You are insulted; state your conditions to yours."

"Very well! And you, gentlemen, I call you to witness," cried Gratien, "that, if any mishap comes to this old man, it is because he would have it so; it is of his seeking. Let his blood, if it is shed, be upon his own head!"

And, so saying, the young officer, followed by his friends, left the club.

The chevalier, left alone, searched the bottom of his glass for a last drop of posset. Then he muttered under his breath, as he took his umbrella from the corner of the window where he had placed it on entering, —

"*Mon Dieu!* how vexed I am, now, at that imbecile of a Black for allowing himself to be stolen! If Dumesnil could have seen me, he would have been pleased!"

XXXIV.

IN WHICH THE CHEVALIER FINDS BOTH WHAT HE IS SEEKING AND WHAT HE IS NOT SEEKING.

The chevalier left the Hollandais a very different man from the one who had entered. His hat, ordinarily placed on a perpendicular with the axis of his face and inclined slightly over his eyes, had assumed a diagonal tilt that gave him an air wholly swaggering, and even somewhat blustering. One hand, thrust into his pocket, played there in a most free and easy fashion with some louis whose chink was audible, while the other brandished his umbrella, executing with the point of that pacific implement the most capricious thrusts of fencing. He who ordinarily walked along with bowed head, turning out into the street for a child in possession of the sidewalk, now carried a high head, shoulders erect, chest thrown out, like a man who has valiantly conquered his place in the sun, halting imperturbably that passers-by might inconvenience themselves for him; which they did not fail to do, — some out of respect for his age; others in deference to his cross, others, finally, because they were really impressed by the chevalier's crushing air. He was for an instant tempted to enter a tobacco shop and buy a cigar, an object for which he had always professed the most unconquerable aversion; it seemed to him that a cigar was the necessary complement of his new attitude; and he pictured himself complacently puffing skyward, like another Cacus, enormous clouds of smoke, and thus

acquiring a new point of resemblance to his friend Dumesnil, whom for the time being he was taking as his model. But, unhappily, he bethought himself of a certain evening at Papaete, when, having taken a cigar from the lips of Mahouni and inhaled a few mouthfuls of the odorous smoke with which the young Tahitienne liked to envelop herself as with a cloud, he had been overcome by a dreadful nausea and an illness from which he was three days in recovering. He thought that a like exhibition given to his enemies might compromise the reputation he had just acquired, and he judiciously renounced this desire. The chevalier fell back therefore upon the impressiveness which his consciousness of the personal prowess that had just revealed itself within him must lend his countenance, and he modestly re-entered the Hôtel de Londres.

Now, truthful historian as we are, we must confess, that, despite the assurance and aplomb with which the chevalier had challenged Gratien d'Elbène, in spite of the self-satisfaction his valiant behavior occasioned him, Monsieur de la Graverie slept very badly. It was not the fear of death or of pain that caused his insomnia; no, two very different things disturbed him: first, the fate in store for Thérèse in case misfortune should overtake him; secondly, that, once arrived on the ground, his attitude might belie itself, and not correspond sufficiently with the prospectus he had issued. As for Thérèse, he was somewhat reassured when he thought of the promise made him by Henri, — a promise which must become still more sacred to the latter when he should learn over whom he had promised to watch. Monsieur de la Graverie hoped, also, whatever his brother's attitude, to be able to insure the young girl's future by an olographic will in due form.

The duel remained.

A few hours of solitude and reflection had served to cool the chevalier's blood; and, although his determination remained unshaken, yet he was obliged to muster all his faculties in order to remain serene.

Unfortunately, the task was difficult; and the more the chevalier endeavored to prove to himself that he had every reason to be tranquil, the more did a swarm of gloomy thoughts take possession of his brain. All the things that a few hours before had seemed unworthy of regret, now appeared to him so sweet, so good, and so alluring that he could not bear to part with them. All the joys, the pleasures, the delights of his past life presented themselves to his mind, and, joining hands, they danced a provoking, alluring measure before his memory, appearing to say, with accents full of melancholy: "Adieu, chevalier! You are about to lose us; you might easily have kept us if you had not played the young man, the brawler, the duellist, the redresser of wrongs, the Don Quixote, indeed!"

The chevalier found this chorographic evocation extremely disagreeable. At one and the same time, a chaos of sinister perspectives opened up in the remoteness of his imagination, as if to be in keeping with the foreground. He felt the chill of death freeze his flesh and penetrate his very bones. He thought the spirits of the other world were coming to bear away his corpse; he felt upon his face the breeze made by the great wings of bats beating the air. The slightest noise in the neighborhood seemed to be that of a hammer nailing together the planks of a coffin designed for him. Wide-awake as he was, he dreamed that he was lowered into the ground, and he heard the clay and stones falling heavily upon his coffin. He felt a thousand grave-worms gliding between the folds

of his shroud, and his flesh shuddered in anticipation of their cold, clammy touch. Thus the night, mother of all mournful apparitions, seemed to him very long; and when he saw the first streak of day, he hastened, contrary to his wont, to spring from his bed.

"Really," said the chevalier to himself, shivering, partly with cold, and partly through mental agitation, "I was not meant for a hero! Still, I shall be the more deserving in my own eyes if I acquit myself well; but it is strange that yesterday, when I should have hesitated, I had not the least fear in the world, while now I am shivering from head to foot. However, I cannot challenge a man every hour of the day merely to keep my courage at the proper temperature!"

The chevalier, in order not to allow these demoralizing thoughts to torment him afresh, decided to write to Henri d'Elbène, without naming his adversary, telling him that the meeting would in all probability be fixed for the morrow, at eight o'clock in the morning, and begging him, therefore, to come for him at seven o'clock and accompany him to the rendezvous. He did not wish to place him in communication with the officers, who would have told him all; and between that time and the next morning, or the hour fixed for the meeting of the seconds, he hoped to find another who should regulate the terms of combat with Gratien's seconds.

The letter finished and sealed, Monsieur de la Graverie went out to post it himself. On important occasions the chevalier preferred to rely on himself. As he emerged from the *porte-cochère* of his hôtel, he found himself face to face with the man who had promised to recover Black.

"Oh! oh! out already, monsieur?" said Pierre Marteau, accosting him. "Well, I can say that there is a

dog more fortunate than most people. Take my case! I could wander off and be lost, and no one would lose any sleep over it, God be thanked! But, as for the other, the hour will soon be here."

"What hour?" demanded the chevalier, whose head was not yet quite clear.

"When I hope to put you in possession of your dog."

"You have seen him again? Oh, take me to him, my good fellow! If I had my dear Dumesnil near me, I think I should not be afraid of anything!"

"Patience! patience. We will approach the place very quietly, and you shall see whether I have lied."

"But where are you going; or, rather, where are we going?"

"To the dog-market, *pardieu!* You do not think that the thief who carried off your dog has taken him for a keepsake? Come, now!"

"But what then?" demanded the chevalier.

"This is the way of it; the dog has not been reclaimed; they have seen no notice, no advertisement, no reward little or big. They are at ease; so much so, that I swear your dog at this very hour is walking, as we are, in the direction of the Barrière de Fontainebleau."

In short, at the Barrière de Fontainebleau, on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays, every week, there was a horse-sale at which a dog-trade was carried on, as a sort of complement or appendix, so to speak. Two painters — one of whom has been taken from us in the vigor of his age, Alphonse Giroux, and Rosa Bonheur, the woman with the gentle name and masterful talent — have painted two pictures of this scene, which, with different qualities, have perfectly reproduced its picturesque features.

Yet let us say, in passing, for the edification of those who take our words literally, one must not go to the

horse-market to look for the magnificent animals that take elegance and luxury out for an airing in the streets of Paris or on the gravelled roads of the Bois de Boulogne. The horse-market is essentially utilitarian; beauty, lightness of limb, high-breeding, are not quartered there — not at all; people go there to get working-machines, and, too, they wish to get them on the most economical terms. Suffice to say that, aside from a few Percherons and Boulonnais suitable for cart-horses, only such are to be found as have been used, broken down, and worn out on the Paris pavement, that Inferno of horses; only poor foundered wrecks are to be seen, from which speculation is obstinately bent upon extracting all that God has put of strength into their muscles, of sturdiness into their loins, before reducing them to dust by submitting them to the charnel of Montfaucon. The animals especially to be distrusted at the horse-market are those that appear healthy and sound. One can wager that they are restive, or subject to the staggers.

In spite of the wretched aspect of the individual specimens of the horse family gathered at this sale, the scene as a whole is not wanting in animation. A horse worth thirty francs is made to trot, gallop, and paw the ground, to the accompaniment of cracking whips and clattering sabots, exactly as they do at Cremieux's or at Drake's with a half-blood worth a thousand crowns; there are the same tricks, the same jargon, the same oaths as at our most fashionable dealers', and there is infinitely more of color here than there, — that is to say, at the Barrière de Fontainebleau than at the Champs-Élysées.

As we said a little while ago, a dog-trade is carried on in connection with the horse-trade. Reduced to honest proportions, a dog business would be a poor industry; therefore, as a man is expected to make a living out of

his business, the dog-dealers have undertaken to make theirs as lucrative as possible. Instead of raising dogs, which, reckoning on six francs a month at least, gives at the end of a year a total of seventy-two francs as the cost of the animal before realizing a centime of profit, they have judged it infinitely more simple and more remunerative to gather from the public highway the dogs already raised, and place them on sale. Then, as stray ones became scarce, they resorted to the manufacture of estrays, as we have seen done in the case of Monsieur de la Graverie's spaniel.

The dog-market, which has led us into this learned dissertation, is held in the counter-alleys of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, in the neighborhood of the Barrière de Fontainebleau or d'Italie. Some of these interesting quadrupeds are tied to stakes. The little ones are caged. The large ones walk about with their masters, or, rather, with those who have become so through circumstances so fortuitous that, owing to their variety, we shall not even broach them in this chapter. Dogs are to be found there of all sizes, of every degree of fatness and leanness, of every fur, race, and feature. There are dogs from the Pyrenees, with tawny hair and benign bearing: look out for them if they are called sheep, like the one that crunched my hand one day. There are bull-dogs with flat noses, bulging eyes, and teeth like the tusks of a wild boar. There are terriers, mastiffs, setters, Dalmatians, and pointers more or less thoroughbred. There are shepherd dogs and King Charles spaniels. The hounds, from turnspit to aristocrat, are represented. Wolf-dogs, white and black, resembling diligence drivers wrapped up in their furs; naked Barbary dogs, looking as if they had gone out without theirs, and always shivering; Cuban dogs, so difficult to find under their long

silky hair, — one and all are to be met with. Even the pug-dog, — that celebrated animal, illustrious almost, which once was supposed to have disappeared like the mammoth, and whose breed Henry Monnier prided himself on having rescued from oblivion, — the pug dog even sends a few specimens from time to time. Then comes a rabble of dogs, — a rabble so numerous, so varied, so fanciful in its ramifications, that Buffon at sight of it would very certainly have torn up his nomenclature of the canine kind, together with the genealogy that he built for each race, — a genealogy to-day indecipherable.

For nearly two hours the Chevalier de la Graverie and his companion had traversed again and again the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, alleys and counter-alleys, and they had not yet discovered what they came to seek. More than ten times already, honest Pierre Marteau, anxious to earn his money, had said to the poor chevalier, pointing to a dog approaching the description of Black, —

"Look, monsieur, is n't that your Dumesnil?"

And more than ten times already had the Chevalier de la Graverie answered with a heavy sigh, —

"Alas! No, that is not he."

Suddenly our hero uttered a cry of joy. At the opposite corner of the Rue d'Ivry he had caught sight of a man leading two dogs by leashes, and one of them was Black. The man was talking with a gentleman who appeared to be examining the spaniel with the liveliest interest.

"There he is! There he is!" cried Monsieur de la Graverie. "See, he has heard me, he is looking my way! Black! Ah, my poor Dumesnil, in my present predicament, how glad I am to see you again!"

Monsieur de la Graverie wished to cross the street;

but at this moment the jockeys were trotting out, — not one, but ten horses. It was impossible to clear the street without imminent risk of being trodden down; and honest Pierre Marteau, not having the same grounds for enthusiasm as had the chevalier, happily preserved his self-possession, and opportunely held him back.

In the mean time, the gentleman had drawn his purse from his pocket, paid the dealer, and, receiving the leash by which Black was led, he was about to set off.

The Chevalier de la Graverie, hindered as we have described, saw the whole transaction and shouted, —

"Stop! Stop! That dog is mine!"

But the sound of his voice was lost amidst the yelling of horse-traders, the snapping of whips, and the echoing of hoofs on the pavement.

At last the way was clear; Pierre Marteau loosed his hold on the coat-flap of the chevalier, who darted away in pursuit of the purchaser.

"Monsieur! Monsieur!" cried he, trotting up behind, "that is my dog, there, that you have just bought!"

The gentleman, who had at first paid no attention to the chevalier's cries, became aware that the speech was addressed to himself, and, anxious as he seemed to be to carry off Black, he turned round.

"Eh? Beg pardon, did you speak?"

"I said, monsieur," repeated the chevalier, almost out of breath, "that you are taking my dog away."

"You are mistaken, monsieur," answered the purchaser; "the animal I am holding belongs to me by two titles, although one is sufficient to justify possession; I raised him myself; I never sold him, and yet I have this minute just bought him."

"Your pardon, excuse me, master," said Pierre Marteau, politely but very firmly at the same time; "but I

must tell you the animal belongs to monsieur. I saw it stolen from him Friday; as a proof of it, I have been hunting for him two days."

"See, monsieur, see, he knows me!" cried the chevalier, taking Black's head between his hands and kissing his forehead.

"Unfortunately, monsieur," coolly but resolutely replied the purchaser, "that proves only one thing, — namely, that you were in possession of this dog after he had been stolen from me. I doubt whether you can affirm, on your word of honor, that this dog has been owned by you longer than two years, and yet he is to-day well through his eighth year."

"Monsieur," said the chevalier, who, bearing in mind the story of Thérèse, felt a little uneasy in his conscience, "monsieur, put a price on him, and I will pay whatever you are pleased to ask."

"No price can tempt me, monsieur; I am, thank God, rich enough not to be forced to sell my dogs. Besides, this one is of inestimable value to me; he recalls dear, precious memories. I assure you, too, during the year or fifteen months since I lost him in the Bois de Boulogne, few days have passed in which I have not thought of him. I have recovered him, I shall keep him."

"Keep Black, monsieur? Impossible!" cried the chevalier, who was growing remarkably hot-headed. "Monsieur, this dog is mine. I would risk my life, if necessary, to regain possession of him."

"Monsieur," returned the purchaser, knitting his brows, "although I feel some sympathy for what I think I must regard as a touch of lunacy on your part, I am constrained to say that you annoy me."

"Oh, whether I annoy you or not, monsieur," rejoined the chevalier, who was gradually assuming his belligerent

bearing of the day before, "I have a duel on hand to-morrow; and, my faith, while I am about it, I shall not go out of my way to avoid a second affair. I must have my dog."

And, as he uttered these words, the chevalier resolutely raised his voice.

"Oh, not so loud, monsieur!" replied the chevalier's adversary, with much calmness. "Look, people are already collecting about us; and, for a man of your age, it is not just the thing to make such a spectacle of yourself. Here is my card; in an hour I shall be at home. I hope you will have regained a little self-possession, and I will await you to settle this affair in whatever manner you choose."

"Very well, monsieur, in one hour!"

The unknown bowed frigidly to Monsieur de la Graverie and walked off, taking Black, who, in the matter of ownership, doubtless failed to recognize the right of priority, and who followed only as he was dragged along, turning toward the chevalier with looks that broke his heart.

At last, when Monsieur de la Graverie had lost sight of Black and the man who was dragging him off, he cast his eyes down at the card that he was holding in his hand, and read there the name and address.

"Chalier! where the devil have I seen that name?" muttered the chevalier to himself, as he directed his steps toward a cab-stand. "My poor head is so befogged with all that has happened that I truly believe my memory is failing me on account of it. That rascal of a dog has caused me many trials; but nothing could hurt me so much as his loss — Ah! all this augurs but ill for to-morrow!"

And, as an empty cab was passing, he signalled the

driver, who drew up. Pierre Marteau adroitly opened the door.

"Ah, my friend," said the chevalier, "it is true, I had forgotten you. Man is, indeed, a very ungrateful animal!"

And taking three or four louis from his pocket, he handed them to the honest fellow. But the latter shook his head.

"Is n't that enough?" said the chevalier. "Come to the hôtel, and I will give you more."

"Oh, I did not mean that, monsieur."

"What do you want, then?"

"I mean that I can still be of use to you, were it only to swear, before the proper person, that the dog is certainly yours, and that you were leading it by a leash when it was stolen from you on the Boulevard des Italiens."

"Well, yes, come! An honest man is always useful; and, if you cannot serve me in that, you may in something else. But how will you go?"

"With the driver, *pardieu!*"

"Get up, then, with the driver, my friend."

Then, as if to lash himself into a rage, the chevalier muttered to himself, —

"Yes, yes, yes, even if I have to fight this Chalier with pistols muzzle to muzzle across a handkerchief, I will have Black! And you will not forsake me, will you, my poor Dumesnil, when I am risking my life for you?"

Pierre Marteau had shut the door and climbed up with the coachman.

"Where do we go, master?" he inquired.

"Rue des Trois-Frères, No. 22," answered the chevalier.

The *fiacre* set off.

XXXV.

IN WHICH, AFTER IDENTIFYING HIS DOG, THE CHEVALIER IDENTIFIES A FRIEND.

A PREY to very melancholy reflections, the chevalier reached the Rue des Trois-Frères.

Monsieur Chalier had just returned but a few minutes before. The chevalier asked the concierge about Black; the concierge had never heard of Black; but Monsieur Chalier had returned with a dog that was unknown to him. It was a spaniel of a most beautiful black color. That was all that the chevalier desired to know.

Monsieur Chalier occupied the second floor of a very fine house. Monsieur de la Graverie hurriedly mounted the stairway, hoping to see Black again, and seeking for some phrase by which to soften the heart of the former owner of his dog, — a heart which, for that matter, seemed very unmalleable from all that he had seen of it. And during the ascent he asked himself whether it would not be his wisest course to confide to the aforesaid Chalier his suspicions with regard to the former human existence in which Black had lived, when he carried a sword at his side and wore a captain's epaulets. He rang at the door of the second floor with the question still unsettled, and repeating the while, for the tenth time, the phrase addressed to himself in the form of an interrogation: —

"But where the devil, now, have I seen the name of Chalier?"

Monsieur Chalier had in fact returned; but as it was ten o'clock, and as a man of business he maintained strict order in his household, he immediately sat down at the table, his breakfast being invariably served at ten o'clock. But, upon sitting down, Monsieur Chalier had expressly ordered that if a gentleman called who was about fifty years of age, small, short, plump, with a red ribbon in his buttonhole, he should be shown into the salon. This description applied so well to the chevalier, that the servant, upon opening the door to him exclaimed: —

"Ah, it is the gentleman whom monsieur expects?"

"I believe so," hazarded the chevalier.

"Come in, monsieur, and I will at once inform my master, who is at breakfast."

The chevalier had not yet breakfasted, and, more than that, he was so preoccupied that he had scarcely thought of this meal, to which he ordinarily attached a certain degree of importance. And so, thoroughly imbued with the gastronomic theory of Berchoux, which teaches that nothing should be permitted to disturb an honest man at his meals, Monsieur de la Graverie replied with instinctive courtesy: —

"By no means, by no means! do not disturb Monsieur Chalier. I will wait in the salon."

The servant conducted the chevalier thither, and proceeded to inform his master of the arrival of the expected visitor, reporting his words, — to which Black, lying at the feet of his new owner, appeared to give the most intelligent attention.

Meanwhile the chevalier upon entering the salon had advanced straight to the fireplace, where a good fire was blazing; and, turning his back to it, he began to warm his calves, asking himself for the eleventh time: —

"But where the devil have I seen this name of Chalier?"

At that instant the chevalier's attention was attracted by a large oil-painting, which seemed to recall a more vivid recollection to his mind than the one brought up by Black's new master.

"Ah," exclaimed the chevalier, "the roadstead of Papaete!"

And he ran to the picture. At last, Dieudonné remembered where he had met with the name of Chalier, which had so greatly puzzled him. Hardly had this remembrance flashed with full enlightenment across his mind when he heard behind him the creaking of an opening door. He turned, and beheld Monsieur Chalier. Then not only did he recall the name, but he recognized the face. He threw his hat on the carpet, ran to Monsieur Chalier, and grasping both of his hands, exclaimed, —

"Oh, monsieur, monsieur! you have been at Tahiti, have you not?"

"Why, yes," said Monsieur Chalier, quite astonished at this sudden change of humor in a man whom he already regarded as an adversary.

"You were there in 1831, aboard the sloop-of-war, the 'Dauphin'?"

"Yes."

"There was yellow fever on the vessel?"

"Yes."

"On the eighth of August, a man of fifty years, tall, dark, spare, with a black moustache and iron-gray hair, was rowed out from Papaete, boarded the 'Dauphin,' and caught the yellow fever?"

"Captain Dumesnil, *parbleu!*"

"He was the one, Dumesnil! Ah, I am not mistaken, you knew Dumesnil?"

"I knew him well! He was my best friend."

"No, monsieur, no! I was his best friend; that is my boast. Ah, there is a Providence — *sacrédié!* — yes, there is one!" cried the honest chevalier, with tears in his voice, and swearing profanely for the first time in his life.

"I have always believed so," answered Monsieur Chalier, smiling.

"Embrace me, monsieur! Let us embrace!" said the chevalier, throwing his arms round the neck of the man whose throat he had wished to cut ten minutes before.

"Very well!" said Monsieur Chalier, in a phlegmatic tone that contrasted strongly with the eagerness of Monsieur de la Graverie, "admit that there is a Providence; and in honor of that Providence embrace me, once, twice even, if you absolutely insist upon it; then be so good as to explain yourself, for after what has taken place I have a great mind to call in my people, and despatch you to Charenton."

"Monsieur," said the chevalier, "you are right; for I am mad, yes, literally mad, — but with joy, monsieur! As for the rest, a single word will explain everything."

"Then say the word."

"I am the Chevalier de la Graverie."

"The Chevalier de la Graverie!" exclaimed in turn Monsieur Chalier, emerging for the first time from the frigidity that seemed to be the habitual temperature of his character.

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"The passenger that joined us the day after poor Dumesnil's death?"

"Precisely! and that went with you as far as Valparaiso, where you left the vessel. I was unable to appear on deck more than once or twice, I was so sea-sick."

"True, it was at Valparaiso that I disembarked, taking Black and Black's mother with me. Black, you remember, was very small. Ah, you see now that I was not lying to you."

"Yes; but let us speak, if you please, of another matter than Black just now."

"Of anything that you wish, monsieur."

"Does not my name, the Chevalier de la Graverie, recall certain matters to your mind?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Do you remember the packet that Dumesnil took to you on board the ship, when he caught that fatal malady of which he died, and the name of the person to whom the packet was addressed?"

"Madame de la Graverie."

"Mathilde!"

"Alas! chevalier," added Monsieur Chalier, "I was unable to execute the commission which I had undertaken, thinking to return immediately to France."

"Ah!"

"You saw me land at Valparaiso?"

"Yes."

"In the first place, I remained there much longer than I intended; then, instead of returning across the continent or by doubling Cape Horn, I took a vessel which, on a voyage of circumnavigation, was returning by the Cape; consequently, when I arrived in France, Madame de la Graverie was already dead."

"But did you learn no details of her death, none of the child she left, monsieur?"

"Very few; but, such as I learned, I will tell you."

"Oh, I beg you to do so!" entreated the chevalier, clasping his hands.

"Your brother, as you are undoubtedly aware, exacted

that she should not acknowledge her child; she had a daughter."

"A daughter, — yes, monsieur, it was a daughter!"

"This daughter was baptized with the name of Thérèse."

"Thérèse! You are sure of that?"

"Perfectly sure, monsieur!"

"Continue, monsieur; continue! I am listening."

In fact, the chevalier's very soul seemed to hang on the lips of the narrator.

"The child was intrusted to a woman called — "

Monsieur Chalier hesitated.

"Mother Denniée," quickly prompted the chevalier.

"That was it, monsieur; but I searched for this woman without being able to discover the least trace of her."

"Ah, well, monsieur, I have found her myself!"

"Who?"

"Thérèse!"

"Thérèse?"

"Yes; and, thanks to you, I shall be able very soon, I hope, to call her my daughter."

"Your daughter?"

"Certainly."

"Why, it seems to me — "

Monsieur Chalier stopped short; the ground on which he was venturing seemed scorching hot.

The chevalier interpreted his thought. "Yes, you are surprised," he said, with a sad smile; "but when death has passed over an offence, my dear sir, he is a miserable fellow that remembers it! Then, too, I confess it, I have spent long years of my life in love with myself; but, as age advances, I am growing fickle. My first infidelity to myself was for a dog; and from a dog I shall advance to my child. Come, monsieur, try to

remember! Have you any proof by which we can establish this young girl's birth?"

"Undoubtedly; if you can prove that she is indeed identical with the one intrusted to Mother Denniée, I have a document, — the one that poor Dumesnil brought on board to me when commending the mother and child to my care, — I have a document which Madame de la Graverie had passed over to him, and which states that the child, of female sex, baptized with the names Thérèse-Delphine-Marguerite, was her daughter."

"And mine, therefore!" cried Monsieur de la Graverie, radiantly. "*Pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant!*"

And never was this axiom of conjugal right, which has enraged so many husbands, invoked with a more joyous countenance and a more gratified heart.

When the chevalier had given vent to his satisfaction, he thought it time to acquaint Monsieur Chalier with the rôles of the different personages enacting the drama whose *dénoûment* he, Dieudonné, was awaiting with so much anxiety. He ended his narrative by relating what had taken place at the club-house, the morning before, between himself and Monsieur Gratien d'Elbène.

Monsieur Chalier, upon learning of the duel which was to come off the next morning, said all he could to dissuade the chevalier from fighting. But the sight of Black, and the feeling of angry excitement experienced by the chevalier in the morning, had completely restored his courage.

"No, my dear sir," said he, "no, no, no! I am not to be shaken! I had already determined to fight when I was actuated merely by suppositions as to Thérèse's birth; now that I am sure that she is Mathilde's daughter, I would face a thousand deaths for her! Yet, bless me! it is after all a bit of egotism: I have always been an

egotist, and I shall remain one till the end! Yes," continued he, pointing to Black, who had pushed open the door of the salon, and had just taken a melancholy pose with his head on the chevalier's knees, "I have found so much joy in suffering for them that I am certain there must be in a death endured for a being one loves a source of comfort and happiness of which no one has an idea, and with which I shall not be sorry to become acquainted."

"Very well," answered Monsieur Chalier; "since you are so determined, my dear Monsieur de la Graverie, do me, then, the honor to accept me for a second."

"Ah, monsieur! I was about to ask it of you," exclaimed the chevalier, greatly pleased.

"Then, it is settled?"

"Yes, it is settled; and we have not a moment to lose."

"How is that?"

"My adversary's seconds will be at the rendezvous, Terrasse des Feuillants, at one o'clock to confer with mine." The chevalier took out his watch. "It is now twenty-five minutes past ten," he added.

"Very well; you see, then, that we have time enough."

"True; but I have not breakfasted."

"I would gladly ask you to breakfast with me; but I must find you a second friend."

"Why?"

"To discuss the conditions of combat."

"That is unnecessary. I have another friend, but I am anxious, for serious reasons, that he shall not see my adversary and his seconds until on the ground. I beg of you, then, to arrange the terms of the duel alone."

"What instructions have you for me?"

"None."

"But if our opponent gives us the choice of weapons?"

"Don't accept! He is the insulted one; I will accept no concessions."

"However, you have a preference for one weapon or another?"

"A preference, monsieur? Oh, no, thank God, I detest them all!"

"But still, you know how to fire a pistol, to handle a sword?"

"Yes; poor Dumesnil, in spite of my repugnance for all instruments of destruction, taught me how to defend myself with them."

"And you use them passably well?"

"Monsieur, you know those little green parrots with the orange-colored head, a little larger than house-sparrows, and to be found in all the South Sea Islands?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, at the top of a tree I could kill three out of five, regularly."

"That is not equal to Dumesnil's skill; he could kill three out of three; but still it is very pretty. And with the sword?"

"Oh, as for the sword, I know only how to parry; but I can parry very successfully."

"That is not enough."

"And then I know one thrust —"

"Aha!"

"Only one."

"If it is a certain thrust with which Dumesnil has touched me ten times, it will do."

"That is the very thrust, monsieur."

"Then I have no further anxiety about you."

"Nor have I, — but on one condition, still."

"What?"

"Allow Black to follow me to the ground, dear Monsieur Chalier. I am very superstitious, and I think that his presence will bring me good luck."

"Black shall follow you, not only to-morrow, but always, chevalier; and I am truly happy to be able to offer you an animal that you prize so much."

"Thank you, monsieur, thank you!" cried the chevalier with his eyes full of tears. "Ah, you do not know what gift you are making me! Black, you see, is not a brute animal, he is — But no, you will not believe me," added the chevalier, regarding first Black and then his new friend. Then, extending his arms to Black, he called, "Black! My good Black!"

Black leaped into the chevalier's arms, uttering gentle yelps of joy, to which the chevalier answered quite low:

"Be tranquil, now, my poor Dumesnil! Nothing shall ever part us again, — at least," sadly added the chevalier, "at least, nothing but a pistol ball or a sword thrust."

But, as if he had comprehended, Black broke away from the chevalier's arms, and began to jump about so gladly and bark so gayly that Monsieur de la Graverie, who, as he had said, believed in omens, taking this one for what it seemed to be, cried out quite boisterously, at the same time extending his hand to Monsieur Chalier: —

"*Sac-à-papier!* dear friend, did you not mention a breakfast which was awaiting you, and of which you would offer me a share?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"Well, to table, then, to table! and *vive la joie!*"

Monsieur Chalier regarded the chevalier with astonishment; but he was becoming accustomed to the eccentricities of his new acquaintance, and in a voice that contrasted very oddly with his words he repeated: —

"To table, then, and *vive la joie!*"

And he led his guest to the dining-room, where a breakfast was served, the like of which Monsieur de la Graverie had not eaten since the day on which he had dismissed Marianne.

On emerging from No. 22, Monsieur de la Graverie found his cab at the door. Honest Pierre Marteau was beside the cab; he had eaten a less sumptuous but probably as welcome a breakfast as the chevalier's had been; the pork-butcher opposite and the wine-merchant at the corner had provided the refreshments.

"Well! well!" said the good-natured fellow, upon seeing the chevalier leaning on the arm of Monsieur Chalier, with Black following them, or, rather, following Monsieur de la Graverie, "it seems that you have settled with the owner of the dog, and that everything has turned out in the best possible way."

"Yes, my friend," answered the chevalier; "and, as I wish it all to end as well for you as it has ended for me, you may continue to accompany me as far as the hôtel, where, if you are willing, we will settle our accounts."

"Oh, there is no hurry, master; I can trust you."

"Good! And if I am killed to-morrow?"

"But you are not going to fight."

"Not with monsieur here," said the chevalier, straightening, "but with another."

"No!" said Pierre Marteau; "really, on my word of honor, at first sight I would not have believed you to be so hot-headed; but, fortunately, you will sleep between now and then, and the night brings counsel."

The chevalier entered the *fiacre*, where Monsieur Chalier was already awaiting him. Black, who undoubtedly dreaded some new accident, would enter only after his master. Pierre Marteau closed the door on

the two men and the dog, after which he again took his place beside the driver.

Just as the *fiacre* was stopping in the Rue de Rivoli, before the door of the Hôtel de Londres, two officers approaching each other from opposite directions met on the Terrasse des Feuillants.

"Excellent!" said the chevalier, "there are our men. Don't delay, my dear Chalier, and be firm."

Monsieur Chalier intimated that his friend should be satisfied, and hastened across the Rue de Rivoli, while the chevalier invited Pierre Marteau to follow him. Pierre Marteau obeyed.

Arrived in his room, Monsieur de la Graverie proceeded to install Black among his cushions, and when he had seen him comfortably settled he said, —

"Ah, your turn next, my good man!"

And, unlocking a drawer of the secretary, the chevalier took out a little pocket-book of red morocco, whose worn edges indicated long use at the hands of its owner, and he drew from it a slip of translucent paper, which he presented to Pierre Marteau. The latter unfolded it with a slight hesitation, and although he was not very familiar with the Bank of France, he recognized the fact that the piece of paper came from that estimable establishment.

"Oh! oh!" said he; "signed Garat! that is a signature that is very easily cashed, and on which there is small discount. How much shall I bring back to you, master?"

"Nothing," answered the chevalier; "I had promised you five hundred francs if I found my dog; I have him, and I am keeping my word."

"For me? All that for me? Come, no joking, master; a man's feelings are close to the skin!"

"The note is yours, my friend," said the chevalier, "keep it."

Pierre Marteau scratched his ear. "And," he said, "you give it to me without grudging it?"

"Ungrudgingly, and gladly too!"

"But, along with the note, you would not give a shake of your hand?"

"Why not? Both of them, my friend, and with great pleasure!" And he extended both hands to the proletarian.

Pierre Marteau held the delicate hands of the chevalier clasped for some seconds within his own calloused palms, and he freed them only to wipe away a tear that was rolling down from the corner of his eye upon his cheek.

"Ah, well," said he, "you can boast that the curé of Sainte-Élisabeth will say a skull to-morrow, and on purpose for you, too."

"A skull? — what is that, friend?"

"Why, a skull mass! And I know one thing: if anything happens to you to-morrow, it will be because there is no good God up yonder."

And Pierre Marteau went off, wiping away a second tear.

The chevalier did as well as Pierre Marteau; only, he wiped away two at a time. Then he went to the window and opened it, while trying to whistle a little tune. He saw Monsieur Chalier in deep conference with the two seconds of Gratien d'Elbène.

XXXVI.

WHICH WILL BE VERY SATISFACTORY TO THOSE OF OUR READERS WHO LIKE TO SEE PUNCHINELLO CARRY OFF THE DEVIL IN HIS TURN.

That night the Chevalier de la Graverie slept blissfully. True, he had his friend Dumesnil near him, in the guise of Black.

At seven o'clock in the morning, thanks to a barber whom he had sent for from the Rue de Castiglione, the chevalier was not only attired, but he was also shaved and his hair was dressed, all with more care than he had bestowed on his toilet for a long time; and he walked up and down his room calm and almost smiling. Black, for his part, seemed overcome with maddest glee.

It is true that the chevalier was not thinking the least in the world about his duel, and that it was not at all, as one would naturally have supposed, out of courtesy to Monsieur Gratien d'Elbène that he had had himself so carefully groomed. No, the chevalier was thinking of Thérèse; of Thérèse, who was coming to join him, and whom, through two letters, — the one written to Monsieur Chalier, the other to Henri, — he was leaving, thanks to Madame de la Graverie's document, his *bona fide* daughter, and, by right, his sole and only heir. It was for Thérèse that he had shaved and made such a a painstaking toilet. He thought what joy it would give Thérèse to learn that she was his daughter; for he had

firmly resolved not to alloy that joy by telling the child of her mother's shortcomings. He had even told himself that in case of necessity he would take the blame for the prolonged abandonment of the poor orphan.

At a quarter past seven, some one knocked at the chevalier's door. It was Henri d'Elbène.

Monsieur de la Graverie gave a quick glance at the young man, and saw plainly by the serenity of his countenance that he was entirely ignorant as to the identity of the chevalier's adversary.

"You see, monsieur," said Henri, with the courtesy by which a gentleman may be known leagues away, "how promptly and faithfully I keep my word."

A kind of remorse seized the chevalier's heart. Was it right for him thus to make Henri his second against Gratien, to make brother cry vengeance against brother? And so it was with a somewhat clouded face that he answered the young man: —

"Still, Monsieur Henri, while thanking you for your punctuality and for the proof of interest that you are indeed giving me, I confess I should have preferred to see you wanting at the rendezvous."

"Why is that, monsieur?" demanded the astonished baron.

"Because the duel about to take place concerns you much more nearly than you have supposed, or can even imagine."

"What do you mean?"

The chevalier placed a hand on the young man's shoulder and with simple dignity said: —

"Monsieur, in spite of the great difference in our ages, you have, by your firm character unfettered by foolish prejudices, by your noble sentiments, inspired me with profound esteem, and, permit me to add, a lively friend-

ship. But it was not, however, either esteem or friendship that led me to give you the confidence that you received from me the other day."

"Then by what other motive were you actuated, monsieur?"

"Listen; it were much better that you did not know it, much better, while there is still time that you should go away without accompanying me where I must go. I release you from your oath; I hold you acquitted of your promise; and the more I think of it, the more I find it not only reasonable, but loyal and human, to do so. The poor child whom you loved, and who herself loves you still, would not wish me to have you associated with the punishment."

"Why this reticence, Monsieur le Chevalier?" demanded Henri; "tell me of whom you are speaking, I conjure you! The poor child whom I have loved and who loves me still, do you say? But I have loved only one woman in my life, and that woman is —"

Henri hesitated; the chevalier completed his sentence.

"Is Thérèse, is she not?" said the chevalier.

"How do you know the name of Thérèse? How do you know that I have loved Thérèse?" asked the baron, quickly.

"Because Thérèse is my daughter, monsieur, my only daughter, my cherished child; and because her betrayer, the man who abused his resemblance to his brother to commit a crime, is — your brother!"

"Gratien!"

"Himself!"

"Then, you are meeting my brother?"

The chevalier said nothing; his silence gave answer.

"Oh, the unhappy man!" cried Henri, burying his face in his hands. Then, after a moment, he asked,

"But how could he have consented to engage with the father of the young girl whom he had betrayed?"

"He is not aware that I am the father of Thérèse; besides, I have so insulted him that he is left no choice as to whether he will or will not fight."

"Oh, my God! my God!" groaned Henri.

"Come, come! courage, friend!" said the chevalier; "it really seems odd that it should happen so soon that I recommend that to others — courage! Return home; yet there is one promise of yours upon which I shall still count."

Henri made a sign indicating that the chevalier could rely upon him.

"If I fall, which is possible," continued the chevalier, with a sweet, sad smile, — "if I fall, I leave to you my child, my daughter, my Thérèse — yours, Henri! Watch over her, console her, protect her! Monsieur Chalier — there is his address — will furnish you with the means to secure the acknowledgment of her right to my fortune."

"No, monsieur, no!" exclaimed Henri, rising, and conquering his emotion; "conscience is conscience, and there is no compromising with it. What was infamous in another continues to be so in my brother. I will not forsake you. Were your antagonist any other than Gratien, I should wish to take your place; for it is I whom he has offended, far more than you. But, whatever may be the ties that bind me to him, I shall testify by my presence all the horror I feel at his abominable deed. If you must become the avenger, I personify remorse. Let us go, monsieur; let us go!"

"That resolve comes from a great heart, my young friend, and I do not know how to express better the great esteem I have for your moral sense. But consider;

I have so gravely insulted your brother that any hope of reconciliation on the ground would be chimerical."

"Ah, if I were free, monsieur," cried Henri, "Thérèse should be happy, Thérèse should be reinstated, although — oh, it is too dreadful! A brother! but, twins as we are, monsieur, great as is the resemblance between our faces, just as great is the difference in our characters. He lives in the din of balls and *cafés;* I live in solitude. Since his return to Paris, I have not seen him twice. But I am wandering from the subject; I am exonerating myself to you in some sort from any part in another's crime. In a word, when you see her again, chevalier, — for, however unnatural such a wish may seem to you, I hope you will see her again, — tell her that the one who loved her so well, who loves her still, would not abandon her father in this trying moment, though it broke his heart!"

The chevalier extended a hand to the young man; then, glancing at the clock, —

"The hour advances, my dear Henri," said he. "This is my first encounter; I have not earned the right to keep them waiting. Let us go now. Here, Black!"

"You do not intend to take your dog?"

"Assuredly; I should not like to leave my best and oldest friend behind at such a time. Ah, if he were not dead, poor Dumesnil!"

Henri regarded the chevalier with astonishment.

"Never mind," said the latter, "I am all right."

On the way downstairs the chevalier and Henri d'Elbène encountered Monsieur Chalier, who was just arriving; he had come in his carriage, a handsome, closed *calèche,* drawn by two good horses. All three entered the carriage.

"Chatou!" directed Monsieur Chalier to the coachman.

The chevalier introduced his seconds to each other.

"What arrangements have you made with our adversary's seconds?" inquired Henri of Monsieur Chalier.

"According to rules, in every point," returned he. "The gentleman did not wish to take advantage of the offence; chance has settled everything. The principals station themselves at thirty paces, each with a loaded pistol in his hand; they each have the right to take five steps, reducing the distance to twenty, and to fire at will."

"You can handle a pistol?" inquired Henri, with a slight tremor in his voice.

"Yes, a little, thanks to Dumesnil," answered the chevalier, smoothing the silky ears of his dog.

"Very well!" said Monsieur Chalier, ignorant of the degree of relationship uniting Henri and Gratien. "In the South Sea Islands the chevalier used to kill three parrots out of every five; a man is quite four times as broad as a parrot. You see, therefore, that we stand some chance."

The chevalier remarked Henri's sombre face, and took his hand.

"My poor friend," said he, "did I not have Thérèse back of me, Thérèse to think for and love, I should say, 'do not be uneasy about the fate of my adversary.'"

"Do your duty, chevalier," Henri answered. "My life was already very sad; the better to endure its burden, I have sought distraction in study. Let what may happen, henceforth it will be sadder still; but I shall pray God to make it of short duration."

Discreet as he was, Monsieur Chalier was about to risk an interrogation; the chevalier signalled him to be silent.

The coachman, according to his master's order, brought up opposite to the Hôtel de Bougival. Another carriage

standing on the bank proved that the chevalier's opponent was on the scene before him. In fact, while the chevalier and his two seconds were on the boat that was conveying them to the island, they saw through the trees the black silhouettes of the three officers. All three were in citizen's dress.

They touched land. Monsieur Chalier, advancing first, walked towards Louville, who was smoking his cigar, seated on the stone seat that is still to be found at the extremity of the island.

"Pardon, monsieur, for having kept you waiting," said, he, drawing out his watch; "but, as you see, we are not late. The rendezvous was for nine o'clock, and it lacks five minutes of nine."

In fact, the church of Chatou, which was five minutes ahead of Monsieur Chalier, began to strike nine o'clock.

"Do not apologize, monsieur," said Louville, "you are, on the contrary, as exact as a sun-dial. Besides, while waiting for you, we have used our time to advantage; we have chosen a glade that looks as if it had been laid out expressly for cutting one's throat. The regularity of the surrounding poplars will perhaps serve almost too well as a guide for the weapons of these gentlemen, and will render the encounter the more murderous; but as, after all, they have not come here to toss cherry-stones at each other, and as it is the best spot we could find, I hope you will ratify our choice."

Monsieur Chalier bowed in assent, and in so doing he unmasked Henri, who was giving his arm to the chevalier.

Gratien perceived his brother, and became as pale as death; but he addressed not a word to him.

The little group silently turned in the direction of the glade of which Louville had spoken.

"Ah, my poor friend," said the chevalier to Henri d'Elbène, "I am truly grieved that you are here."

"Don't think of that," responded Henri, "think of yourself; let us talk of you."

"Oh, no," returned the chevalier. "*Peste!* you would be doing me a very bad turn without suspecting it. On the contrary, do not talk of me, and think of me as little as possible. See here; to you, dear friend, I can acknowledge that I am not brave, or rather I look brave only because I am thinking of anything but the affair in hand; and, just now, when I caught sight of those green-serge cases containing the weapons, one of which in ten minutes' time will perhaps have stretched me out on the grass, I was seized with an ill-omened shiver! Ah, my dear Henri, at Chartres I have such a charming room, so fragrant with the odor of the roses blooming under my window, that — under my breath I confess it — I would rather be there than here. But, once more, *morbleu!* don't let us talk of that; only, bear in mind my request concerning Thérèse."

"Have no fear."

"You promise me?"

"Need I promise you a thing so near to my heart?"

"Ah," said the chevalier, paling slightly, "here we are, I see! The site seems to me, indeed, admirably chosen. Decidedly, Lieutenant Louville understands this business better than he understands dog-poisoning, eh, Black?"

The seconds came to a halt. They took from their serge covers the pistols which had sent a chill through the Chevalier de la Graverie, and Monsieur Chalier and one of Gratien's seconds proceeded to load them.

In the mean time, Gratien motioned to Monsieur de la Graverie to draw near the group of seconds; then, avoiding his brother's eye, he said: —

"Gentlemen, I have been greatly insulted by Monsieur de la Graverie; the honor of the uniform I wear demands reparation; still, there is between us such disparity of age, that if he will merely say that he regrets having yielded to his anger, although it seems a little late to do so, I shall be satisfied with his apology."

"I will ask your pardon, I will do it on my knees," answered the chevalier, "I will do it with my head in the dust and with tears in my eyes, if on your part you will acknowledge the wrongs that you have inflicted upon Thérèse de la Graverie, my daughter, and will redress them by marrying her."

"Oh, come now!" interjected Lieutenant Louville.

"Silence, monsieur!" said Henri d'Elbène, instantly grasping the young man's arm; "silence! Your interference has been up to this hour too disastrous to these two men for you to continue it here, where it is not only dangerous but unbecoming." Then, addressing himself to Gratien: "Give an answer, brother," said he. "An appeal addressed to you should be answered by you and not by a stranger."

"I have nothing to say," said Gratien.

"Think of it!"

"It is just because I do think, that I am silent. If I accepted the chevalier's conditions here on the ground, I should be called a coward."

A salute, polite but decisive, accompanied these last words, and the chevalier and Henri withdrew to one side.

Then Monsieur Chalier and Lieutenant Louville measured off thirty paces, which Monsieur Chalier made as long as possible, marked with a broken branch the limits to which the combatants might advance, and then prepared to present them their weapons.

"Monsieur," said Henri, "you can assert, on your honor, that these pistols are unknown to Monsieur de la Graverie's opponent?"

"On my honor," responded the two officers.

One of them added: "I bought them myself at Lepage's."

"Are they double-triggered?"

"No, monsieur."

"That is all, monsieur," said Henri.

The pistols were handed to the two principals. They took their places. Black followed the chevalier, pressing closely against him; the chevalier could feel him: he thanked the dog with a grateful glance.

"Come, monsieur," said Louville, "send away your dog."

"My dog does not leave me, monsieur," returned the chevalier.

"What if he is killed?"

"It will not be the first time that he has risked death for being too faithful; you know something of that, Monsieur Louville."

Then, as Monsieur Chalier gave him some last words of advice, —

"Ah," said the chevalier, under his breath, "you don't know what a queer feeling it gives me to have to shoot at a man: it seems to me that I can never bring myself to do it."

In truth, the chevalier was very pale; the pistol shook in his hand; his white lips moved with a slight convulsive twitching; now and then he pulled himself together, and strove to control the emotion that was gaining the mastery in spite of him.

"Monsieur," said Gratien's second witness, coming forward to take the chevalier's hand, "you are a brave

man, and your conduct is ten times more meritorious than it would be in another."

The second had already retired, when Gratien, who for some moments had seemed a prey to keen emotion, indicated to his brother that he wished to speak to him. Henri ran to the young officer. The latter drew him aside and said a few words in his ear. Henri appeared deeply moved by what his brother was saying to him. When he had finished speaking, Henri took him in his arms, pressing him to his heart and kissing him repeatedly. Then, leaving him, he went and seated himself upon the ground at the chevalier's left, turning his back to the combatants with his head in his hands.

Louville asked if the opponents were ready.

"Yes," answered they with one voice.

"Attention!" said Louville. And he counted: "One — two — three!"

In accordance with Monsieur Chalier's instructions, the chevalier at the word "three" moved rapidly forward.

Gratien fired as he walked. The young man's ball pierced the chevalier's coat-collar, without even grazing the skin.

Henri turned quickly; he saw the two adversaries standing; Gratien's pistol was smoking. He drew a sigh, and turned away.

The chevalier, as if stunned, stood motionless in his place.

"Why don't you fire, monsieur? Fire!" cried the seconds.

Probably not considering himself accountable for the result, the chevalier raised his weapon which hung at his side, extended his arm, and firing without aim, —

"God's will be done!" he said.

Gratien recoiled, then fell downward to the ground.

Henri turned and saw his brother stretched on the grass. He uttered a cry; then murmured: "Truly, it is the judgment of God!"

All ran up to Gratien. Henri raised the wounded man and held him in his arms.

The distracted chevalier sobbed the while, and besought God's pardon for the murder he had just committed.

The wound was a very serious one. It penetrated the chest on the right side just below the sixth rib, and seemed to include the lung. The blood hardly flowed; the hemorrhage must have been internal. The wounded man seemed to be suffocating. Monsieur Chalier drew a lancet from his pocket and bled him; he had, while on his long voyage, learned how to perform this operation, so necessary in many cases. The patient was relieved and breathed more easily. Then a reddish froth mounted to his lips. A litter was hastily made, and he was borne to the boat.

Meanwhile, Henri, very pale, but master of himself, approached the chevalier.

"Monsieur le chevalier," said he, "at the beginning of the engagement, which, in obedience to a deplorable prejudice, he was unwilling to relinquish, my brother charged me, whatever might be the issue of the duel, to ask you to deign to confer upon him the hand of Mademoiselle Thérèse de la Graverie, your daughter."

At these words the chevalier fell into the young man's arms, and, yielding to his emotion, he fainted away.

When he came to himself, Henri and the wounded man's seconds, with the wounded man, had departed; he was alone with Monsieur Chalier, who was chafing his hands, and Black, who was licking his face.

XXXVII.

WHICH WILL GUARD AGAINST ENDING OTHERWISE THAN AS THE LAST CHAPTER OF A STORY USUALLY ENDS.

When Monsieur de la Graverie returned to the Hôtel de Londres, he was informed that Thérèse had arrived and was awaiting him in his room.

The chevalier's agitation was so great that he lacked the courage to tell her the events which had so greatly modified his mode of existence. He acquainted Monsieur Chalier with what should be said, and sent him into the room while he waited outside the door.

Thérèse was exceedingly astonished at seeing a stranger enter the room instead of Monsieur de la Graverie, but Monsieur Chalier hastened to reassure her; besides, Black, who had scented his young mistress, was following close behind, and he began to lavish all sorts of caresses upon Thérèse. But when she learned of the danger to which Monsieur de la Graverie had just exposed himself for her, she cried out, quite overcome, —

"Oh, my father! my dear father! where are you?"

The chevalier could not resist this appeal. He opened the door and rushed into the young girl's arms, pressing her to his heart and covering her forehead with kisses.

"*Mordieu! cordieu!*" he cried, as he detached himself from this embrace, "this repays me for all I have done for you, my child. Oh, how good it is to see you again

and take you in my arms, when we came so near being separated forever! No! *ventrebleu!* nothing on earth can equal this happiness!" Then, stopping suddenly, as if frightened at himself, "There! there!" he added, "I think it is high time for me to recover my self-control; for the last two days I have been swearing like a pagan, a thing that never happened to me before, even in my greatest rages at Marianne. *Sac-à-papier!* The good canonesses would never recognize me in these days!"

"Dear father," said Thérèse, again embracing the chevalier, "dear father, never, in my most ambitious dreams, could I have dared to wish for what has happened to me to-day." Then, taking up another train of thought, "Alas!" said she, "my poor mother is really dead! Oh, we shall often talk of her, shall we not?"

Monsieur Chalier cast a look full of compassion and anxiety at the chevalier. But the latter did not appear in any way embarrassed by the question the daughter had asked.

"Oh, most certainly we shall talk of her," he answered. "She was so good, and so beautiful! Ah, if you knew how happy she made me in my youth! what charming memories she left me of a time that is now so far away, but which is ever present in my heart!"

"And was she, too, very unhappy?"

"Alas! yes, dear child. What could you expect?" added the chevalier, with a sigh; "I was young, and I was not always reasonable."

"Oh, impossible, father!" cried the girl; "if my mother was unhappy, I am very confident that it was not through you."

"Do you know that that heart of yours is an ingot of pure gold?" said Monsieur Chalier in the chevalier's ear.

"That is good!" returned the latter, "my heart, my heart — I owe it a grudge! Had it not been so sluggish and cowardly eight years ago, I should have been trotting on my knees that dear little being there. That would have been fine, my friend, to be hugged by a little nine-year old girl, all fair and rosy! Well, that is a happiness my selfishness has deprived me of."

Just then a servant of the hôtel entered to inform Monsieur de la Graverie that a young man, the same one that had already been there in the morning, was waiting for him on the landing.

The chevalier quickly disappeared. It was Henri, in fact.

"Thérèse is here," said Monsieur de la Graverie. "Would you like to see her?"

"No, monsieur," answered Henri. "It would not be best either for her or for me. I shall not even be present at the ceremony. My father, to whom I have just related all that has taken place, and who has given his consent to this very tardy reparation, will represent our family in support of my unfortunate brother."

But Thérèse had heard a voice, and, with the extraordinary perception which is the endowment of deep affection, she knew it was Henri's. Before Monsieur Chalier could oppose her purpose, before he could even have suspected it, she had opened the door and thrown herself into the young man's arms.

"Oh, Henri! Henri! You know — you know —" faltered the young girl.

"I know all, my poor Thérèse," said Henri.

"Oh, why did you forsake me?"

"Alas! I am cruelly punished for my weakness," replied Henri; "but let us be equal to our misfortune, Thérèse. In a few moments you will be my sister.

Let us both be worthy of the new ties that will unite us. Let me withdraw."

"Don't leave me at such a moment, Henri, I beg of you! Stay with me until new vows shall part us for the second time."

Henri, who was himself terribly distressed at the thought of leaving Thérèse, lacked strength to resist her appeal, and resigned himself to following her to his brother's side.

However painful the journey might be, Gratien had insisted upon being taken back to Paris. He was carried to his home in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

The chevalier, Thérèse, Henri, and Monsieur Chalier found Monsieur d'Elbène, the father, and the two officers who had acted as seconds, at the wounded man's bedside. A physician who had been called was in attendance.

Gratien was placed on a couch, and was supported by cushions in an almost upright position, to prevent the accumulation of blood in the chest. He was pale, and yet his eyes possessed a quiet serenity of look that had before been entirely wanting. When he saw Thérèse enter, herself pale and altered, supported as she was on the one side by Henri, on the other by the chevalier, Gratien slowly drew his hands from beneath the blood-stained covers, and clasped them together, as though asking the young girl's forgiveness. His breathing was so oppressed that he could speak only with the greatest difficulty. But it was the Comte d'Elbène who spoke.

"My son has grievously wronged you, mademoiselle," said he; "he is justly but cruelly punished! Deign to pardon him, and to soothe by your compassion the last moments of my poor child."

Thérèse threw herself on her knees at the side of Gratien's bed, took within her hands the hands already chilled by approaching death, and pressed them to her sobbing lips. Feeling her clasp, Gratien brightened, and endeavored to address a smile to his joyless bride.

Just then the civil officer and the priests who had been sent for entered the room. The former proceeded with the marriage ceremony according to the civil law. Then the priest and his acolytes, having donned their sacerdotal robes, began the religious ceremony.

Truly impressive was the spectacle presented in that room. All around was the imminence of Death: blood-stained linen was strewn about the floor; upon a chair lay the physician's case and instruments; sitting in corners and standing about the bed were pale-faced, sorrow-stricken men; out of the midst of all came the sound of Thérèse's sobs breaking upon the monotonous tones of the priest as he chanted the prayers, and over and above all the sharp, hissing respiration of the wounded man; lastly, the aspect of the bride and groom, — the one being this poor girl barely recovered from the terrible malady she had just escaped, and overcome by emotion; the other giving himself to Death in the same breath as to the young woman, and who for his bridal bed would have a bier. All this, illumined by the flickering light of a few wax candles, formed a scene of the most touching character.

When the priest asked Gratien if he consented to take Thérèse for his wife, Gratien pronounced such a clear, distinct "yes" that it was heard at the other end of the apartment; then, resting his head upon his hand, he seemed to await anxiously Thérèse's response to the same question.

As the words were pronounced consecrating before God

the union of these two, Gratien let his head fall back again upon the pillow, gently pressing the hand of Thérèse which the priest had placed in his; then, his eyes sought Monsieur de la Graverie, who, having knelt at the foot of the bed, was praying fervently.

"Are you content, monsieur?" murmured he, with dying voice.

But the double effort of making the response and addressing this question to the chevalier had exhausted the injured man. A convulsive movement seized him; what remained of color in his face and light in his eyes died out.

"Madame," said the priest, "if you wish to receive your husband's last breath, it is time."

The young girl bent over Gratien's form; but before her lips touched the lips of the wounded man the soul had left the body. Gratien had yielded up his last breath.

Black, of whom no one was thinking, raised his voice in a prolonged, dirge-like wail that struck a chill into the veins of all.

The Chevalier de la Graverie was a long time recovering from the terrible shock occasioned by this catastrophe and the circumstances preceding it. Other cares, other anxieties alone succeeded in distracting his mind.

Madame la baronne d'Elbène had become a mother, and, for a heart so sensitive as the chevalier's, the newcomer — the child was a boy — was no moderate source of torture. He busied himself at once about the choice of a nurse, and the care to be bestowed on mother and child; and, as if this were not enough, his imagination,

which was apparently striving to make up for the time it had squandered in inaction, caused him to anticipate, all in a heap, the weaning, the childhood, the youth, and the manhood of this baby. He pondered what means he would employ to protect from the dangers of the world this poor little being who had not yet escaped those of teething.

One day, after her recovery, the chevalier insisted that Thérèse should accompany him on his customary walk, interrupted by so many events. The Baroness d'Elbène, who was incapable of refusing anything to a father so kind and thoughtful, amiably consented.

The chevalier led the way to the bench on the hill of La Courtille, where he had formerly been in the habit of seating himself daily to contemplate the view. He sat down first, and made Thérèse sit at his right, the nurse at his left; then he took Black between his knees.

"And to think," he said, "that Monsieur Chalier absolutely denies that Dumesnil can be under this black skin. And yet he has done it all!"

"No, dear father," answered the young woman, with a smile, "it was the pieces of sugar you had left in your pocket."

The chevalier for some moments remained silent, with his eyes fixed on the two great spires of the cathedral, lifting to the clouds their crosses of bronze and gold.

"In fact," he exclaimed, "it is very much simpler to believe that all that has happened is the work of Him who is on high. But, in any case, it does you no harm, my poor Black!" And, under cover of kissing the spaniel's nose, he whispered low, "My dear Dumesnil!"

All this while, the good Chartrains, who were idly sauntering over the hills, were observing the chevalier, and saying, —

"Just look at Monsieur de la Graverie; he is radiant!"

"I should say so! His stomach was getting bad; truffles no longer agreed with him; lobster did not agree with him; just in the nick of time, he has found a new sin to take the old one's place."

"Oh, how can you say that? They say that the young woman is his daughter."

"His daughter! And you believe it, do you? Ah, you are very simple, my dear! You little know what rakes they are, these gentlemen of the old school!"

FINIS.